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SCS #1184

THE

Proteſtant-Diſſenter's CATECHISM.

CONTAINING,

I. A BRIEF HISTORY of the NONCONFORMISTS:

II. The REASONS of the DISSENT from the NATIONAL CHURCH.

DESIGNED

To inſtruct and eſtabliſh YOUNG PERSONS among the DISSENTERS in the PRINCIPLES of NONCONFORMITY.

By the Rev. SAMUEL PALMER, of *Hackney*.

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED.

Take heed to thyſelf, and keep thy ſoul diligently, leſt thou forget the things which thine eyes have ſeen, and leſt they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy ſons, and thy ſons ſons.

DEUT. iv. 9.

BELFAST:

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PREFACE.

THE deſign of the following work is to inſtruct and eſtabliſh young perſons and the unlearned, among the Diſſenters, in the principles of Nonconformity. A deſign which, it is hoped, will not be thought unneceſſary, or unimportant.—It is not unneceſſary, ſince it is too evident that many Diſſenters, in the preſent day, are only ſuch by education, and know little of the principles on which the diſſent is founded, and on which alone it can be vindicated. In conſequence of this, ſome of them are Bigots, and others are indifferent; and the cauſe of Nonconformity ſuffers both ways. No wonder if thoſe of the former claſs ſhould prejudice others againſt it, by their ignorant zeal in defending it. Nor is it more ſurpriſing if thoſe in the latter ſhould deſert it, or occaſion others to do ſo, and conform to the religion of their country,

whenever the temptations of fashion, or worldly honour, of secular advantage, or agreeable friendships, of family connexions, or convenience of situation, should strongly invite them to it; and especially when, to either of these motives, is joined that of an ingenious, popular, or evangelical ministry. Instances of this kind are not uncommon amongst us; especially of occasional conformity at places of public resort, where many amongst us are ashamed to avow their principles, thro' fear of appearing unpolite. A piece of meanness which one would think must often defeat its end, and instead of recommending them to the regards of Comformists, must excite their contempt.—The long interval of peace and liberty which the Dissenters have enjoyed, the moderation which hath of late prevailed among the sensible and pious of the established church, and especially that disregard to the dictates of conscience, and that declension in true piety, which are the common consequence of outward prosperity; have contributed to render Dissenters careless about understanding their principles, and indifferent to the support of their cause. Too many of them, it should seem, scarcely think it is worth supporting: at least, it does not appear to them of such importance, as to make it worth their while to take much pains, or practise much self-denial, in order to maintain it. Tho' thro' the

the power of cuſtom, and particular connexions, they continue Diſſenters themſelves, if ſecular intereſt invite their children to conformity, they have nothing to ſay againſt it, but rather encourage them to it. "They are not ſo bigotted "as to think religion confined to a party. They "know many good people belonging to the "eſtabliſhed church. Many of the prayers are "very good. They have heard very good ſer-"mons at church too; and ſome of the Clergy "are found Goſpel-preachers." All this is true, but not ſufficient. Which leads me to ſpeak of the *importance* of the Diſſenting Intereſt; and this will evince the importance of the following work.

If the cauſe of Nonconformity, be of ſo little conſequence, that worldly advantage may be ſuffered to turn the ſcale, it is not worth ſupporting, and it would be moſt prudent to let it drop. Should any be diſpoſed to aſk, (as ſome very conſiſtently with their conduct may) "And "where will be the harm if it ſhould?" The author will take upon him to ſay, It would be greatly injurious to the intereſt of Proteſtant-Chriſtianity, which cannot be defended on any other principles than thoſe on which the Diſſenters found their ſeparation, viz. The right of private judgment, and liberty of conſcience, the acknowledgment of Chriſt alone as head of his

church, and the sufficiency of the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and practice. If these, therefore, are given up or forgotten, this nation may again be lost in the labyrinths of Popish superstition, and groan under the weight of Church-tyranny*.

But supposing the best; Is it of no consequence that we should bear our testimony against that authority, in matters of faith and conscience, to which that church lays claim, and those additions to Christianity which she hath presumed to make; Or that the doctrines and institutions of the gospel be maintained in their original purity and simplicity? It must surely be allowed of great importance to the honour of Christ, and to christian edification. Yea, may it not be added? The Dissenting interest is of great consequence to the support of virtue and practical godliness in the nation. God forbid any of us should think these are only to

* Dr. *Edwards* makes a free and honest acknowledgement on this head, worthy of notice here. "If (says he) we "would but open our eyes, we should see that we are be-"holden to the *Dissenters* for the continuance of a great "part of our theological principles: for if the high-church-"men had no checks, they would have brought in Popery "before this time by their over-valuing pomp and cere-"mony in divine worship. So that if there had been no "Dissenters, the church of England had been long since "ruined." *Edwards's Preacher*, Vol. II. p. 183.

be

be found amongſt ourſelves: it is here with pleaſure owned, that ſome of our conforming brethren have furniſhed the brighteſt examples of ſound morality and chriſtian piety, of which any church can boaſt. But it muſt be maintained, that thoſe corruptions in regard to worſhip, ceremonies, and diſcipline, which are found in the national church, (tho' the hearts of ſome of its members are too good to be hurt by them, as hath been the caſe with ſome in the church of *Rome*) have nevertheleſs an hurtful tendency, in a moral and religious view, with regard to the bulk of the people, and endanger their taking up with "the form of godlineſs "inſtead of the power of it." In this reſpect the Proteſtant-Diſſenters (as one of their writers* hath fully evinced) have greatly the advantage. The very nature of our profeſſion leads to greater purity, at leaſt in the outward behaviour; and our freedom from forms and ceremonies affords peculiar advantage for attending to the religion of the heart. Our liberty alſo in the choice of our miniſters, and in the admiſſion and ejection of our communicants, muſt be allowed to operate in favour of good order and piety in our churches. (Would to God the effects thereof were *more* viſible!)——It may moreover be af-

* Dr. *Watts*, in his *Humble attempt*, &c.

firmed, and has been allowed by moderate church-men themſelves, that the ſupport of our Diſſent is of importance to the intereſt of piety and virtue, even in the national church itſelf; as it proves a reſtraint to ſome of the members and miniſters of it, and excites a ſpirit of emulation among them.

From theſe conſiderations, it appears well worthy the friends of liberty and pure chriſtianity to exert themſelves in ſupporting the Diſſenting Intereſt, and conſequently to inſtruct the riſing generation in the principles of it, that they may become its ſteady, and rational advocates. Thoſe who are themſelves Diſſenters upon principle muſt, one would imagine, perceive themſelves to be under ſtrong obligations to train up their children and domeſticks in thoſe principles and practices to which they find themſelves in conſcience bound to adhere. Conſiderate and conſcientious church-men cannot blame them for ſo doing, but muſt condemn them as ſtrangely inconſiſtent if they do not.

To aſſiſt them in this branch of education, is the deſign of the preſent Eſſay. And happy will the author eſteem himſelf, if it ſhall be thought by the judicious, calculated to anſwer this end.

He

He hopes it will not expose him to censure, from any worthy members of the established church, as destitute of christian candour or proper respect. It would really give him pain to injure or grieve one conscientious man among them. For many of them he has an high regard, with some a friendly connection, which he wishes to preserve; and gladly would he promote among Christians of all parties mutual candour and friendship, where their characters are unexceptionable, at the same time that he freely and zealously vindicates what appears to him, on an impartial enquiry, the cause of truth, of liberty and religion. If he has here written any thing inconsistent with this profession, or that may seem too severe upon the established church, he hopes it will be attributed more to the ardor of his zeal for the *cause* he espouses, than to any degree of malice towards the *Persons* whose principles he condemns. If he is mistaken in any circumstance alledged against the establishment, or any *other*, (which may probably be the case where so many points are handled) he wishes to be convinced of his errors, and promises, upon conviction, to correct them in the next edition*.

* Some corrections, are accordingly, made in this edition, for which the author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to several of his friends. Here are also some other small alterations, and some few additions, which are principally in the notes. The most material alteration will be found, PART I. Q. 12, 13.

In order to promote the *ſucceſs* of this work, the author begs leave to expreſs his earneſt wiſh that thoſe who are pleaſed to encourage it, would not only recommend the *careful peruſal* of it to thoſe into whoſe hands they may put it, but take ſome pains with any young perſons more immediately under their care, to make them maſters of the ſubject of which it treats; and examine into their proficiency, by aſking them the principal queſtions in the Catechiſm, though it ſhould not be thought neceſſary for them to commit the anſwers to memory verbatim, but only to anſwer in their own words; which will indeed afford a better proof of their underſtanding the ſubject.—It is alſo much to be wiſhed that thoſe whoſe time and circumſtances will admit of it, might have larger works put into their hands, when they are maſters of this, with a view to perfect their knowledge of the Hiſtory and the Principles of the Nonconformiſts, to which this is only deſigned as an introduction. Of the principal of theſe, therefore, a Catalogue is added at the end.

There is only one thing more which the Author would ſuggeſt in this preface, and that is, a ſerious caution to all his readers againſt ſatisfying themſelves with acquiring, or promoting in others, the moſt accurate acquaintance with the ſtate of the controverſy between us and our conforming

conforming brethren, to the neglect of what is of unſpeakably greater moment, and what ought ever to be conſidered as the ultimate end of all—the experience of the power of religion in the heart, and the zealous practice of it in the life. Without this, chriſtians of all other denominations, and infidels themſelves, may juſtly upbraid us with aſking, "*What do you more than others?*" Without this, with all our boaſted knowledge and zeal, not only virtuous Church-men, but Papiſts and Jews, Mahometans and Heathens, will riſe up in judgment againſt us. It was a regard to vital godlineſs that occaſioned the original diſſent, and animated the zeal of our fore-fathers in the ſupport of it. It is by this alone that it can long be maintained, and without this indeed it is ſcarcely worth maintaining. To corroborate theſe ſentiments, and enforce a regard to them, the author would earneſtly recommend the ſerious peruſal of that excellent treatiſe of Dr. WATTS, entitled "*An humble Attempt towards the Revival of practical Religion.*" of which the following extract from the Preface ſhall ſerve as a cloſe to this.

"I am well ſatisfied that the great and ge-
"neral reaſon of the decline of the Diſſenting
"Intereſt in any place, is the decay of VITAL
"RELIGION in the hearts and lives of men.—
"If this be not our hope and deſign, the ſup-
"port

" port of that Intereſt is but of little import-
" ance. What is it that we mean by aſſerting
" the rights of conſcience in our ſeparation
" from the eſtabliſhed church, but more effec-
" tually to promote the kingdom of God among
" men, to do more honour to the name of
" Chriſt our Saviour in his Inſtitutions, and
" better to carry on the bleſſed work of the ſal-
" vation of ſouls?"

HACKNEY,
Sept. 7, 1773. S. P.

THE

PROTESTANT DISSENTER'S

CATECHISM.

PART THE FIRST.

A BRIEF

HISTORY of the NONCONFORMISTS.

Q. 1. *HOW many* Religions *are there in the world?*

A. Four: the Pagan (or Heathen), the Jewiſh, the Mahometan, and the Chriſtian.

Note, Beſides theſe, multitudes in all parts of Europe are *Deiſts*, who have not, as ſuch, any form of religion or public worſhip. They profeſs to believe in God, and many of them in a future ſtate, as the dictates of reaſon, but deny all revelation.

Q. 2. *Who are generally comprehended under the name of* Chriſtians?

A. All who profeſs to receive the religion of Jeſus Chriſt as divine.

Q. 3. *What is the* grand diviſion *which has taken place among Chriſtians?*

A. Chriſtians

A. Christians (in this western † part of Europe) are divided into Papists and Protestants.

† Note, In the *Eastern* part there is a *Third* denomination, viz. those of the *Greek Church*, which in many respects, particularly in its ceremonies, resembles that of *Rome*.

Q. 4. *Who are called* Papists?

A. Those who are in communion with the church of Rome, often called Roman-catholics, but more properly Papists, because of their subjection to the Pope ‡, whom the greater part of them receive and honour as Christ's vicar, and universal bishop.

‡ In Latin *Papa*, a name at first given to all bishops, but afterwards appropriated to the bishop of *Rome*, when he usurped the office of universal bishop.

Q. 5. *Who are meant by the term* Protestants?

A. This name was given to those who first publickly protested against the errors of Popery; viz. at *Spire* in *Germany*, 1529; and from them it has been, to this day, applied to those christians in general (in the West) who are not Papists.

Q. 6. *Are the* Protestants *in* England united *in their faith and manner of worship?*

A. No; they are divided into Conformists and Nonconformists; or as they are commonly called, Church-men and Dissenters.

Q. 7. *Who are called* Conformists, *or* Church-men?

A. Those who conform to that mode of worship, and form of church-government, which are established and supported in England by the state.

Q. 8. *Who are intended by the term* Dissenters?

A. The term properly signifies persons of a different opinion (in any matter) but now commonly

monly denotes those in general who do not conform to the established church, but meet for divine worship in places of their own: more especially those of the three following denominations, *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, and *Baptists**.

* So commonly called, for brevity sake, but more justly *Anti-pædo-baptists*.

Q. 9. *How* long *have there been* Dissenters *in England?*

A. In the proper sense of the word, there were Dissenters in England long before the Reformation took place here.

Q. 10. *What do you mean by the* Reformation?

A. The renouncing of Popery, which for many ages was the established religion of this country, and of almost all Europe.

Q. 11. *What were they* called *who* dissented *from the church of England, before she renounced Popery?*

A. Lollards, (a term of reproach equivalent to that of *Fanatics* †) and *Wickliffites*, on account of their embracing the doctrines of *Wickliffe* ‡, who

† See a full enquiry into the etymology of it in *Mosheim*'s Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 744.

‡ He was born at *Wickliffe* near *Richmond* in *Yorkshire*, about 1324, and studied at *Queen*'s (afterwards at *Merton*'s) college, *Oxford*, where he was some time Divinity-Professor. He maintained most of those points by which the *Puritans* were afterwards distinguished. He wrote several tracts against the principal doctrines of Popery, and was the first who translated the whole ‖ Bible into English. Such was his courage and zeal, that he sent a confession of his faith to the Pope, and declared himself willing to defend it at *Rome*. He was many years minister at *Lutterworth* in *Leicestershire*, where, notwithstanding the danger to which his zeal exposed him, he quietly ended his days, A. D. 1384.

‖ *Gilpin*'s *Lives*, p. 37.

was

was the first person, of any eminence, in England who exposed the doctrines of Popery.

Q. 12. *When was the Reformation of England publickly begun.*

A. In the reign of King *Henry* VIII. 1538, when he quarrelled with the Pope, and denied his supremacy in the church of England, on account of his refusing to authorize the divorce of the Queen.

Q. 13. *Was the church so reformed in this reign as to satisfy all persons of Protestant principles?*

A. No; for notwithstanding *Henry*'s quarrel with the Pope, he passed an act for establishing some of the grossest errors of Popery, which made it death to write or speak against them; in consequence of which several Protestants were burnt.

Q. 14. *How did the Reformation proceed in the next reign?*

A. Edward VI. who succeeded *Henry*, was an excellent and pious prince, though very young, and the reformation was greatly promoted by him. Archbishop *Cranmer* was eminently instrumental herein, particularly in correcting and reprinting the English Bible, and causing it to be read in the churches.

Q. 15. *Was any thing* retained *in the church, in this reign, to which any persons refused to conform?*

A. Yes; many popish ceremonies and habits, which many persons, and some Bishops, declared against and scrupled to use: particularly Bishop *Hooper*, who, refusing to be consecrated in the popish habits, was imprisoned, and his life endangered.

Q. 16. *How long did* Edward *reign?*

A. He

A. He died in the ſeventh year of his reign, (which was the 16th of his age) and was ſucceeded by Queen *Mary*, in the year 1553.

Q. 17. *Did ſhe do any thing towards perfecting the Reformation?*

A. No; but much to hinder it; and in a great meaſure undid what had been done in the preceding reigns, by reſtoring popiſh doctrines, ceremonies, and worſhip.

Q. 18. *What was the ſtate of things among thoſe that diſſented from the church in her reign?*

A. The number of them was much encreaſed: but they were refuſed liberty of conſcience, and perſecuted with great ſeverity. Great numbers fled beyond the ſeas, particularly into *Germany*, where the Reformation flouriſhed. Many of thoſe who remained at home were burnt*, among whom were ſeveral Biſhops. On this account ſhe was called, "The bloody Queen *Mary*."

* Archbiſhop *Cranmer*, Biſhops *Latimer*, *Ridley*, *Farrar*, *Hooper*, Dr. *Taylor*, Mr. *Rogers*, *Bradford*, *Philpot*, &c. The whole number of perſons burnt in this reign was (as Biſhop *Burnet* moderately reckons them) 284. But *Grindal*, who lived at the time, ſays they were 800. Beſides theſe, 60 died in priſons.

Burnet's Hiſt. Ref. Book iii. A. D. 1558.

Q. 19. *What* Biſhops *were the moſt active in executing* Mary's *bloody edicts?*

A. Gardiner Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, and *Bonner* Biſhop of *London*; who delighted in ſeeing the moſt horrid cruelties practiſed, and the latter of whom, in many inſtances, executed them himſelf.

Q. 20. *Who ſucceeded Queen* Mary?

A. Her

A. Her Sister Queen *Elizabeth*, in the year 1558. Who, tho' she was, on the whole, inclined to carry on the Reformation, was too much afraid of offending the Papists, was herself very fond of popish ceremonies, and extremely ambitious of supporting and extending her authority in church affairs.

Q. 21. *What* relief *did the* Protestants *find in her reign?*

A. Tho' they had high expectations from her, so that those of them who had transported themselves abroad, in *Mary*'s reign, returned home when she came to the crown, they found the terms of conformity so narrow that many could not in conscience comply with them.

Q. 22. *What* distinction *took place in this reign among the* Protestants?

A. Some of them were called by their enemies *Puritans*, as a term of reproach, on account of their attempting a purer form of worship and discipline than had yet been established. Whereas the rest were satisfied with the common-prayer-book as it was altered in the time of King *Edward* VI.

The foundation of this difference was laid during their state of exile at *Frankfort*, in the former reign, where some of them were for confining themselves to the use of forms, as they had been established at home, and others were for improving their liberty to the utmost, in reforming whatever they thought exceptionable in them.

Q. 23. *What methods did the Puritans use to accomplish their ends?*

A. Finding no prospect of a further reformation from the legislature, some of the leading persons among them resolved to attempt it in a more private way. For this purpose they erected

a Presbytery at *Wandsworth**, *Nov.* 20, 1572, taking care to keep their proceedings as secret as possible. This was the first Presbyterian-church in *England*.

* A village about six miles from *London*, on the banks of the *Thames*.

Q. 24. *Did* all *those who were called Puritans* separate *from the established church?*

A. No; there were some who complied with the terms of conformity, rigid as they were, in hope of the removal of their grievances by the Queen's successor.

Q. 25. *How were the Puritan party treated in Queen* Elizabeth's *reign?*

A. They were treated with great severity; particularly the *Brownists*†, for opposing the Hierarchy, partly thro' the Queen's desire to please the Papists, and partly thro' the imposing and cruel disposition of some of the Bishops‡.—An act was passed which subjected those that did not conform to the ceremonies of the church to banishment, and in case of refusal or return, to death.—In this reign the *High-commission-court* was instituted, which might truly be called the English-Inquisition.—The court of *Star-chamber*, also, constantly sat in this reign, and was to the last degree severe in its censures and punishments.

† The followers of one *Rob. Brown*, who was educated in C. C. C. Cambridge, and was a preacher in the diocese of Norwich. He wrote very vehemently, and went about the country preaching, against the discipline and ceremonies of the church. His principles were in the main the same with those who were afterwards called *Independents*, excepting that he was more uncharitable towards persons of different sentiments.

‡ Archbishops *Parker*, *Whitgift*, *Bancroft*, Bishop *Aylmer*, &c.

Q. 26. *What*

Q. 26. *What was the effect of these hardships which the Puritans suffered?*

A. They served to encrease their number, and determined them to separate from the established church.

Q. 27. *Was the church any further reformed by* James I. ?

A. No; tho' he had been bred a Presbyterian in *Scotland*, and tho' a petition for a further reformation was presented, signed by a thousand ministers, the terms of conformity were rendered harder than ever by the book of Canons established by parliament, (A. D. 1603,) which remain to this day.

Q. 28. *What* proclamation *did* James *issue out which gave the Puritans, and other good men, remarkable disgust?*

A. One for the encouragement of diversions on the Lord's day, commonly called, The book of Sports.

Q. 29. *How were the Puritans treated in* James's *reign?*

A. Both those that were out of the church, and those that were in it, were persecuted by the Bishops with great violence. Several hundreds of the most conscientious ministers were silenced, imprisoned, and excommunicated; and many of them fled from this persecution into *Holland*, and afterwards into the wilds of *America*.

The first who settled in *Holland*, were the followers of one Mr. *Robinson*, who is considered as the father of the *Independents*. He had fled thither in the last reign, with other *Brownists*, and founded a church at *Leyden* on the congregational plan. Mr. *Henry Jacobs* there imbibed his sentiments on church-government, and when he returned to *England*, founded the first *Independent-church*, in the year 1616.

Q. 30. *What*

Q. 30. *What* ſucceſs *did they meet with who thus tranſported themſelves to that uncivilized country, to enjoy liberty of conſcience?*

A. Though they met with great difficulties at firſt, yet their numbers encreaſing, by reaſon of perſecution at home, they laid the foundation of a noble ſettlement, which has proved ever ſince an aſylum for Proteſtant Non-conformiſts under all their oppreſſions.

Q. 31. *Did the Puritans meet with any favour from* Charles I. ? *

A. No; but on the contrary they were perſecuted by him, while Papiſts were encouraged, through the influence of his Queen (who was a bigotted Papiſt), and ſeveral of the Biſhops, particularly Archbiſhop *Laud*, who was ſtrongly attached to popiſh ceremonies.—In this reign the *Engliſh* Liturgy and Epiſcopal government were introduced in *Scotland*.

* He came to the crown, A. D. 1625.

Q. 32. *What was the* religious character *of this prince?*

A. Much as his virtues have been extolled by his friends, it is certain he was notorious for his diſſimulation: and he encouraged prophaneneſs, by ſuppreſſing afternoon Sermons, and republiſhing the book of Sports, which he enjoined all the clergy to read in their churches; for refuſing which many were turned out of their livings, and excommunicated.

Q. 42. *Has he not been charged with aiming at* arbitrary Government?

A. Yes, and juſtly; for he levied taxes on his ſubjects without conſent of parliament, and in various other inſtances exerciſed an illegal power.

Q. 34. *What*

Q. 34. *What was the* consequence *of his arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings in civil and religious affairs?*

A. They occasioned a civil war among his subjects, a great part of whom joined his parliament in defending their civil and religious liberties, against those that adhered to the King in attempting to enslave the nation.

Q. 35. *How did the civil war* end?

A. The parliament proved victorious, and made the King their prisoner. At length, the charge of high treason being exhibited against him, he was condemned by the house of commons, (then reduced to a small number, and acting under the influence of the army) to lose his head; which punishment he suffered *Jan.* 30, 1649.

Q. 36. *Are not the* Presbyterians *justly charged with the* murder *of the* King?

A. His death is very unjustly charged upon any religious party as such, especially the *Presbyterians*, since it is well known there was but one of them in the house of commons when the civil war began, and that *fifty-seven* of their ministers in *London*, and many in the country, (as well as some *Independents*) remonstrated against the design of the army to take away his life *.

Q. 37. *What was most remarkable* after *the* death *of* Charles?

* Any impartial person will be convinced with what little justice the Dissenters are so commonly reflected upon as *King-killers*, (especially in 30th of *January* Sermons) who will read the account which their own historian, Mr *Neal*, gives of the violence of the army in their proceedings against the King, vol. ii. p. 360. 4to.

A. The

A. The conſtitution was diſſolved, and the monarchy changed into a commonwealth: Preſbyterianiſm took place of Epiſcopacy in the church of *England*, and the penal laws againſt Diſſenters were aboliſhed.

Q. 38. *When the* Preſbyterians *got into power, were not they as great* enemies *to* liberty of conſcience *as the* Epiſcopalians *had been?*

A. It cannot be denied that they were zealous to eſtabliſh the divine right of Preſbytery, too ſevere upon the epiſcopal clergy *, and enemies to the toleration of all other parties of chriſtians, particularly the *Baptiſts* †, who about this time began to flouriſh in *England*.

† The firſt Baptiſt church in *London* is ſaid to have been founded in the year 1640, of which one Mr. *Jeſſe* was choſen paſtor.

Q. 39. *Does not this juſtify the charge ſo commonly brought againſt* Diſſenters, *that their zeal for liberty is only for* their own, *and that they have no objection to arbitrary power when they can get it into their* own hands?

A. No, by no means; for at that time the principles of liberty were not thoroughly underſtood by any denomination of Chriſtians. The preſent body of Diſſenters as ſeverely condemn the Intolerance of the Preſbyterians in *Charles*'s time, as of the High-flying Church-men. They are now friends to an univerſal Toleration, and no denomination among them wiſhes to have its

* One Dr. *Walker*, many years afterwards, wrote a large book entitled, *An attempt to recover an account of the ſufferings of the clergy*, in which are contained many falſe aſſertions and virulent reflections on this head, which the reader will find ſatisfactorily and candidly anſwered in *Neal*'s Hiſt. Purit. vol. ii. p. 17, &c.

own

own way of worſhip eſtabliſhed as the national religion.

Q. 40. *How long did the* Commonwealth *continue?*

A. Little more than four years; when *Oliver Cromwell*, who was General of the army, diſſolved the parliament, and called a new one; who, very ſoon reſigning the government, *Oliver* took it into his own hands, and was inſtalled *Lord Protector*, *Dec.* 16. 1653.

Q. 41. *What was the ſtate of religion under* Oliver's Protectorſhip?

A. His principles were favourable to religious liberty, and he declared for a general Toleration of Proteſtants *. Tho' he allowed the *Preſbyterian* form of church-government, he diſarmed it of its coercive power, greatly encouraged the *Independents*, and protected other parties. And tho', for certain political reaſons, he unjuſtly refuſed a legal Toleration to the *Epiſcopalians*, their aſſemblies were connived at, and ſeveral of their miniſters allowed the exerciſe of their office, without the fetters of oaths or ſubſcriptions.

* ☞ In the articles relating to Religion in the year 1653, the Chriſtian Religion, as contained in the *Scriptures*, was held forth and recommended as the public profeſſion of theſe nations. *Neal*'s Hiſt. vol. ii p. 427. And when the aſſembly were for limiting the toleration to thoſe that believed the *fundamentals*, (which they appointed a committee to draw up) *Oliver* declared againſt them; ſaying, "All men ſhould be left to the liberty of "their own conſciences, and that the Magiſtrate could not in-"terfere without inſnaring himſelf in the guilt of perſecution." *Ib.* p. 446.

Q. 42. *Who* ſucceeded Oliver *in the government of theſe kingdoms?*

A. His ſon *Richard*; but thro' his timidity he reſigned

reſigned the Protectorſhip in eight months, and returned to a private life. After an interval of great confuſion, *Charles* II. the ſon of *Charles* I. (having been ſeveral years an exile) was reſtored, chiefly thro' the influence of the *Preſbyterians*, who had all along oppoſed *Cromwell*'s arbitrary meaſures, and were friends to the *Engliſh* limited monarchy.

Q. 43. *What was the* character *of this Prince?*

A. He was remarkably addicted to pleaſure and lewdneſs, and his Reſtoration was attended with a deluge of wickedneſs and debauchery, which ſpread itſelf from the court thro' the kingdom, and corrupted the manners of the Clergy.

Q. 44. *How did* Charles requite *the* Preſbyterians *for their zeal in his cauſe?*

A. Tho' he made them fair promiſes, and appointed ten of them his chaplains in ordinary, he quickly reſtored the Liturgy, and reinſtated the old ſequeſtered clergy, (even thoſe ejected for immoralities) by which means ſome hundreds of the Preſbyterian clergy were diſpoſſeſſed at once. And tho' the King flattered them with the hope of a comprehenſion with the Epiſcopalians, and they held a conference at the *Savoy* with that view, they ſoon found themſelves deceived. The Biſhops would make no alterations in the liturgy in their favour, but there was evidently a contrivance to keep them out of the church; in which all things were ſoon reſtored to the old ſtandard; men of high-church principles were preferred to biſhoprics, the terms of conformity were rendered harder than ever, and thoſe that refuſed to comply with them were treated with rigour.

Q. 45. *What was the* first act *of parliament in this reign injurious to the* Diſſenters?

A. The *Corporation-act*, which incapacitated any perſon from bearing office in any corporation, who had not taken the Sacrament of the Lord's-ſupper, according to the rites of the church of *England*, within a year before his election; and likewiſe taken the oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy.

Q. 46. *Which was the* moſt remarkable act *in* Charles II's. *reign relating to religion?*

A. An act which took place on *Bartholomew-day* 1662, called the *Act of Uniformity*; which required all miniſters, who would continue in the church, or be admitted to livings, to uſe the ſame form of worſhip, to ſubſcribe the Thirty-nine articles, and declare their aſſent and conſent to a new edition of the common-prayer-book, before many of them could have an opportunity of ſeeing it.

Q. 47. *What was the* effect *of this act?*

A. It obliged about *two thouſand* worthy conſcientious miniſters to leave the eſtabliſhed church, and take their lot among the Diſſenters, who hereby received ſo large an addition, that they may be conſidered as the Fathers of the Diſſenting intereſt.—The name of *Puritans* was now changed to that of *Non-conformiſts*.

Q. 48. *Was the conduct of theſe miniſters to be* commended *who threw themſelves out of their livings on this occaſion?*

A. It was doubtleſs a glorious ſtand which they made in favour of chriſtian liberty, which did great honour to the proteſtant faith, and tended, more than a thouſand other arguments, to convince a licentious atheiſtical age of the reality

reality of religion, and the regard that is due to the rights of conſcience; for nothing but conſcience could be ſuppoſed to influence them in thus ſacrificing their worldly intereſt, which many of them did without any viſible means of ſubſiſtence.

Q. 49. *Were theſe honeſt men allowed* liberty *to worſhip God according to their conſciences* after they left *the church?*

A. No; they petitioned for a Toleration three days after the act of Uniformity took place, but in vain*; and ſoon after (A. D. 1664,) the *Conventicle-act* paſſed, by which any perſon above ſixteen years of age, preſent at any meeting for any religious exerciſe, not according to the church of *England*, where there were five or more perſons beſides the houſhold, was for the firſt offence to ſuffer three months impriſonment, or pay 5*l.*—for the ſecond, ſix months, or 10*l.*—and for the third to be baniſhed for ſeven years, or pay 100*l.*—and in caſe of return or eſcape, to ſuffer death without benefit of clergy.

* Lord *Clarendon*, and Archbiſhop *Sheldon*, oppoſed their being tolerated with peculiar warmth, and prevailed with the council.

Q. 50. *Was any* other act *paſſed to barraſs the* Non-conformiſts?

A. Yes; the year following (1665), the *Oxford-act*, or *Five-mile-act* paſſed, which reſtrained all diſſenting miniſters (on the penalty of 40*l.*) who would not take a moſt unreaſonable *oath* †, therein ſpecified, from coming within five miles of any city, town corporate, or borough, or any place where they had exerciſed their miniſtry; and from teaching any ſchool.

† The oath was this: "I *A. B.* do ſwear that it is not "lawful upon any pretence whatſoever to take arms againſt

" the King, or againſt thoſe commiſſioned by him; and that I " will not at any time endeavour any alteration of government " either in church or ſtate."

N. B. This act was paſſed at a time when the *plague* reigned in *London* to ſuch a degree as to carry off 8 or 10,000 in a week; which occaſioned moſt of the eſtabliſhed clergy to deſert their pariſhes, tho' the people had then moſt need of their help, and were beſt diſpoſed to receive it. Some of the ejected miniſters, moved with compaſſion for the ſouls of men, in this deplorable ſituation, had ventured to preach in theſe deſerted pulpits, but this gave umbrage to thoſe in power, and was a motive to the paſſing this ſcandalous act.

Q. 51. *What was the diſpoſition of the* Biſhops *towards the* Diſſenters *in this reign?*

A. They were for the moſt part very diligent in proſecuting them, and greatly encouraged informers; particularly Archbiſhop *Sheldon*, who ſent orders to all the Biſhops of his province to return the names of all ejected Non-conformiſt miniſters, with their places of abode and manner of life, with a view to enforce the laws more ſtrictly againſt them.

Q. 52. *Did not the king diſcover an inclination to grant a* Toleration?

A. Yes; after the baniſhment of Lord *Clarendon* (who was one of the bittereſt enemies the Diſſenters had) the King moved, in his ſpeech to the parliament, for a general Toleration, and a project was entertained for a comprehenſion; but the Biſhops oppoſed theſe motions, and the parliament petitioned for the execution of the penal laws, ſo that the perſecution was renewed, and the Conventicle-act (which had expired) was revived, with two extraordinary clauſes added to it, which empowered any juſtices, conſtables, *&c.* to break open any place where they ſhould be informed of a conventicle,

conventicle, and inflicted a penalty of 5*l.* on any juſtice that refuſed to execute this act.

Q. 53. *What was the deſign and the effect of* the Teſt-act *which paſſed in this reign?*

A. The *Teſt-act* requires all perſons, taking any office under the government, to receive the Lord's-ſupper, according to the uſage of the church of *England*, within three months after their appointment. The deſign of the commons in bringing in this bill was to exclude *Papiſts* from places of truſt and profit; ſeveral of whom the court had greatly promoted. But it was expreſſed ſo as alſo to exclude the *Proteſtant Diſſenters.*

* *N. B.* This act, tho' ſo flagrantly inconſiſtent with the common rights of good ſubjects, remains in full force to this day.

Q. 54. *How did the* Diſſenters *act in this ſituation?*

A. They forwarded the Bill, as it was ſo good a barrier againſt *Popery*; which circumſtance afterwards expoſed them to the diſpleaſure of the court. The papiſts being excluded from places of truſt, the court no longer diſcovered any tenderneſs for Proteſtant Non-conformiſts, but the King iſſued out a proclamation for putting the penal laws againſt them in full execution; which accordingly was done. And ſeveral ſham plots were fathered upon them to render them more odious to government.

Q. 55. *What was the* effect *of all theſe acts againſt* the Non-conformiſts?

A. Great numbers of them ſuffered the moſt extreme hardſhips, in being fined, plundered, driven from their families, and impriſoned. Their loſs in their trades and eſtates in the ſpace

of three years, is computed at *Two millions*; and *Eight thousand* are said to have perished in prison in this reign. The same persecutions were also carried into *Scotland*; and there, as well as in *England*, many, to avoid the fury of their persecutors, fled their country.

Q. 56. *What was the character of* James II. *who succeeded to the crown on the death of* Charles?

A. He was a professed Papist; had imbibed the most arbitrary principles of government, and persecuted Non-conformists, by enforcing all the penal laws in being against them, with the utmost rigour. Many for their safety transported themselves into *Holland* and the *American* colonies. Great numbers who staid at home, not only endured the utmost severities that the laws inflicted, but were treated by their enemies with the greatest cruelty; particularly by Judge *Jefferies* *, by whom many Dissenters, and other Whigs, were butchered in the most barbarous manner; for which the Duke of *Monmouth*'s rebellion furnished a plausible handle.

* See a true specimen of his persecuting spirit, in his treatment of Mr. *Baxter* at his trial, *Neal*'s *Hist.* vol. ii. p. 749.

Q. 57. *What was the* effect *of these and former* cruelties?

A. Very different from what those who inflicted them intended. The cause of Non-conformity, instead of being ruined, was strengthened thereby; partly thro' the infamous characters of the informers and persecutors, but chiefly thro' the piety, zeal, and fortitude of the sufferers, who "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to "suffer" for conscience-sake. From these and the like causes, though such multitudes were murdered,

murdered, or obliged to fly their country, their numbers were not greatly diminished, by reason of additions from the established church; which several *Clergymen* † in this reign deserted, as a persecuting church, to take their lot among the Non-conformists.

† Mr. *Neal* mentions some of their names. See his *Hist.* vol. ii. p. 752.

Q. 58. *Did this persecution of the Dissenters* continue *thro'* James's *reign?*

A. No; the King very suddenly altered his measures, granted an universal toleration, and even preferred Dissenters to places of trust and profit; tho' it was evidently with a view the more easily to restore Popery. The Dissenters, being jealous of this, would not acknowledge the dispensing power, but readily granted the church that assistance she now asked of them against the Papists. For which, however, they were poorly rewarded, as the solemn promises she made them in the time of her danger, were forgotten as soon as the danger was over.

Q. 59. *What was there remarkably* favourable to Dissenters *during this Prince's life?*

A. William Prince of *Orange*, a protestant of glorious and immortal memory, by the management of the Whigs, was brought into *England* to support the Protestant-cause; at which *James* being intimidated, abdicated the throne, which *William*, (with his amiable consort *Mary*) was invited to accept.

N. B. This event is called the *Revolution*.

Q. 60. *What* act *passed in this reign, in* favour *of the* Dissenters?

A. The act of *Toleration*, which exempted Dissenters from suffering the penalties which the

law inflicted, and permitted them (on certain conditions, to which they themselves in general consented) to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

Q. 61. *Has the* Toleration-act *ever been* repealed?

A. No; thro' the good providence of God, the enemies of the Dissenters have never been able to effect it, tho' they have several times attempted to abridge the liberties thereby granted them.

Q. 62. *When had the* Dissenters *peculiar reason to fear their* liberties were endangered *since the Revolution?*

A. In the latter end of Queen *Anne*'s reign, when the Jacobite party had gained great strength and influence at court, an act of parliament was passed, called the *Occasional-conformity-bill*, which prevented any person, in office under the government, entering into a Meeting-house. Another, called the *Schism-bill*, had actually obtained the royal assent, which suffered no Dissenters to educate their own children, but required them to be put into the hands of conformists; and which forbade all Tutors and School-masters being present at any conventicle, or dissenting place of worship.

Q. 63. *How came it to pass that this* scheme *for enslaving the* Dissenters *again was* frustrated?

A. The Queen *died the very day* that this iniquitous act was to have taken place, *(Aug.* 1st. 1714.) when the Elector of *Brunswick*, *(Geo.* I.) a firm friend to civil and religious liberty, was proclaimed King of *Great Britain*, who procured a repeal of the *Schism-bill* in the 5th year of his reign. In his illustrious family the sceptre has ever

ever since continued, under whose equitable government our legal rights have been preserved, the Toleration-act maintained inviolate, and much greater indulgence granted to Dissenters than that act allows.

Q. 64. *What are the* conditions *by which the benefit of the* Toleration-act *is* limited?

A. All Dissenting Ministers are not only required to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and to make the declaration against Popery, but also to subscribe the doctrinal articles of the church of *England.*

Q. 65. *Do any of the present dissenting Ministers* scruple *to* qualify *themselves by complying with these* conditions?

A. Tho' some have no difficulty in doing it, the generality of them, even those that approve the doctrines of the church, as well as those of different sentiments, refuse to subscribe the articles at the requisition of the civil magistrate, and as a condition of preaching the gospel; apprehending that this would be acknowledging a degree of authority in civil governors, which is injurious to christian liberty and the right of private judgment; but are willing to give all reasonable security for their behaviour as peaceable subjects.

Q. 66. *Are the dissenting* Laity *subject to any difficulties from which the Toleration-act does not relieve them?*

A. The Toleration-act provides no relief for dissenting Tutors and School-masters: but all Dissenters who keep public schools, or teach youth in any private house, are liable (besides the forfeiture of their schools) to a fine of forty pounds, and to suffer three months im-

priſonment. Nor can any perſon be legally qualified to keep a ſchool, or inſtruct youth, without a licence from the Archbiſhop, Biſhop, or Ordinary, and a declaration of abſolute conformity to the church of *England*.

Q. 67. *Have the Diſſenters ever* applied *for a* legal redreſs *of theſe grievances?*

A. In the year 1772, the body of Diſſenting Miniſters in *London* brought a bill into parliament with this view; of which moſt of their brethren in the country expreſſed their approbation. But tho' it paſſed the houſe of Commons, it was thrown out of the houſe of Lords, the whole bench of Biſhops, uſing their influence againſt it; who in this inſtance ſhewed that the ſpirit of Epiſcopacy is ſtill much the ſame as it ever has been. The next ſeſſion the *London* miniſters, with the concurrence of the generality of thoſe in the country, renewed their application, but with the ſame ſucceſs *: tho' they had many learned advocates in the upper as well as the lower houſe, who defended their right in ſuch a manner as to do ſignal honour to their cauſe, and to encourage their hope of redreſs in ſome future period.

* Excepting that the Bp. of *Lincoln* divided againſt the reſt of his brethren in favour of the Bill.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

THE

THE

PROTESTANT DISSENTER'S

CATECHISM.

PART the SECOND.

THE

REASONS of the PROTESTANT DISSENT from the ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

Q. 1. *WHAT are the* grand principles *on which the Proteſtant Diſſenters* ground their ſeparation *from the church by law eſtabliſhed?*

A. The right of private judgment and liberty of conſcience, in oppoſition to all human authority in matters of religion; the acknowledgment of Chriſt alone as head of his church, and the ſufficiency of the holy ſcriptures as the rule of faith and practice.

Q. 2. *Doth not the ſcripture require us* to be* ſubject to *the civil magiſtrate* as the miniſter of God, for conſcience-ſake?

* Rom. xiii. 1—5. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

A. Not

A. Not in matters of religion, much leſs in things contrary to the law of God, for God cannot deny himſelf; ſo that all human laws, which are inconſiſtent with the divine, ought to be diſobeyed.

Q. 3. *But is every private man* to judge for himſelf, *whether the laws of his country are agreeable to the laws of God?*

A. Certainly in the affairs of religion, every man ought to judge for himſelf, ſince every man muſt give an account of himſelf to God ‡, who has given us an infallible rule in his word to guide us, and reaſonable faculties to underſtand it; which private perſons are as capable of uſing, to diſcover the way of truth and duty, as magiſtrates and large bodies of men. Beſides, religion is a perſonal thing, and no further deſerves the name than as it is the effect of conviction and choice.

‡ Rom. xiv. 12.

Q. 5. *But are not* Prieſts *our ſpiritual rulers, and are we not expreſsly required** to obey them that rule over us?

A. They have no juſter claim to implicit faith and unlimited obedience than civil magiſtrates; nor thoſe ſupported by the ſtate than others. The word of God expreſsly forbids chriſtians giving up conſcience to the direction of any men †; and the apoſtles themſelves diſ-

* Heb. xiii. 7—17.

† Call no man your Father upon earth—neither be ye called Maſters—for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt. Mat. xxiii. 9, 10. In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Mat. xv. 9. Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free. Gal. v. 1.

claimed

claimed all dominion over it ‡, and urged it upon their hearers to examine and judge for themſelves ‖.

‡ Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. 2 Cor. i. 24. Neither being as Lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock. 1 Pet. v. 3.

‖ Philip ſaid to Nathaniel, Come and ſee. John i. 46. Why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right? Luke xii. 54—57. Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. Acts iv. 10. Theſe (Bereans) were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica, in that they ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo. Acts xvii. 11. I ſpeak as unto wiſe men, judge ye what I ſay. 1 Cor. x. 15. Let every man be thoroughly perſuaded in his own mind. Rom. xiv 5. Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good. 1 Theſſ. v. 21.

Q. 5. *Have we any* inſtances in ſcripture *of wiſe and good men*'s refuſing to conform *to the national, eſtabliſhed religion?*

A. Yes; Daniel followed the dictates of his own conſcience in praying to his God, as he had been uſed to do, when the king had iſſued out a decree againſt it †; as alſo did the three Hebrew youths, in refuſing to conform to the worſhip of the image which Nebuchadnezzar ſet up; tho' "the princes, the governors and cap-"tains, the judges, the treaſurers, the coun-"ſellors, the ſheriffs, and all the rulers of the "provinces, were gathered together at the dedi-"cation of it," nobly declaring, when threatened with being caſt, (for their *nonconformity*), into the fiery furnace, "If it be ſo, our God whom "we ſerve—will deliver us out of thine hand, "O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, "that we will not ſerve thy gods, nor wor-

† Dan. vi. 10.

"ſhip

" ſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up ‡."

In like manner the apoſtles of Chriſt, diſobeyed the Jewiſh prieſts and rulers in not conforming to the religion of their country; and when reproved by the High Prieſt, for violating their command, bravely anſwered, " We ought to obey God rather than men *."

‡ Dan. iii. 17, 18. * Acts v. 29.

Q. 6. *May a few men who are diſſatisfied with the national religion* publiſh *their private ſentiments, and* worſhip God *according to them, in* places of their own?

A. If men have a right to think for themſelves, they muſt have an equal right to act † according to their judgment and conſcience, and are in duty bound to do it. So that where perſons think the eſtabliſhed forms of religion unſcriptural or defective, a regard to their own edification, and the cauſe of pure religion, requires them to diſſent. On this principle the firſt chriſtians diſſented from the Jewiſh church, the Gentile converts from Pagan eſtabliſhments, and the church of England from the church of Rome.

Q. 7. *Ought we not to be very* cautious *of ſeparating from any church of profeſſed* Chriſtians and Proteſtants, *without very weighty reaſons?*

A. Doubtleſs it is not every trifling circumſtance that will vindicate ſeparations among chriſtians. But the diſſenters apprehend that the grounds of their ſeparation from the church of England, are ſo many and important, as fully to juſtify them in it.

† See Dr. *Furneaux's* maſterly *Eſſay on Toleration.* Sect. iii.

Q. 8. *What*

Q. 8. *What are the principal of thoſe things in the church of England on which the* Diſſent *from it* is founded?

A. 1. Its general frame and conſtitution as national and eſtabliſhed.

2. The character and authority of certain officers appointed in it.

3. The impoſition of a ſtated form of prayer called the Liturgy, and many exceptionable things contained therein.

4. The pretended right of enjoining unſcriptural ceremonies.

5. The terms on which miniſters are admitted into it.

6. The want of Liberty in the people to chuſe their own miniſters. And

7. The corrupt ſtate of its Diſcipline.

SECTION I.

Of the general Frame and Conſtitution of the Church of England.

Q. 9. *WHAT do the Diſſenters think to be a true* Church of Chriſt?

A. A congregation, or voluntary ſociety of chriſtians, who commonly meet together, to attend goſpel-ordinances in the ſame place. And they think every ſuch ſociety has a right to tranſact its own affairs, according to the judgment and conſcience of the members thereof, independently of any other ſocieties whatſoever, or without being accountable to any but Jeſus Chriſt, or reſtrained by any laws but his.

Q. 10. *Is*

Thoſe who firſt maintained this opinion in England, were called *Congregationaliſts*, and alſo *Independents*. But in this reſpect the *Preſbyterians* here, are now agreed with them, as the *Baptiſts* always have been. This is the grand principle by which the Proteſtant diſſenters are diſtinguiſhed, and in which they are all united. And this indeed is the only principle upon which their liberties can be maintained in their full extent: for if every chriſtian ſociety have not the right above-mentioned, a door will be opened to human governors in affairs of religion; and it is no great matter whether they be the members of the *Legiſlature*, of a *Convocation*, or an *Aſſembly*; the authority of either being equally void of foundation in ſcripture, and inconſiſtent with the natural rights of mankind.

Q. 10. *Is this notion of a church of Chriſt ſupported by* Scripture?

A. Yes; a number of chriſtians aſſembled for divine worſhip in a dwelling-houſe is there called a church *. A church is ſpoken of as coming together in one place †. And when affairs were to be determined relating to a church, all the members of it were called together to give their opinion ‡. Nor do we find any human authority acknowledged or claimed in eccleſiaſtical affairs.

* Rom. xvi. 5. Greet the church that is in their houſe. See alſo 1 Cor. xvi. 19. and Phil. 2. It is obſervable that the ſeveral congregations of Chriſtians in the ſame province, are ſpoken of, *not* in the *ſingular*, but the *plural* number, e. g. The *churches* of Judea, the *churches* of Galatia, &c.

† Acts ii. 1, 46. ch. v. 12, 14. 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

‡ Acts vi. 2, 5. xv. 4, 22.

Q. 11. *Wherein does the conſtitution of the* church of England differ *from this account of a Church* in the New Teſtament?

A The church of England is not a voluntary ſociety, the whole nation being conſidered as members of it, whether profeſſedly ſo or not; and obliged by law (excepting thoſe included in the

the toleration-act) at least thrice in the year, to communicate with it in the Lord's-supper. It is also incapable (as it is national) of being assembled in one place, that the members of it may give their vote in ecclesiastical affairs; and the several congregations of which it consists, are equally destitute of this liberty, being all obliged to an absolute uniformity in faith, worship, and discipline.

Q. 12. *Is not the word* church *used in Scripture in a* larger sense *than as denoting a* particular congregation?

A. Yes; but then it comprehends the whole body * of Christians throughout the world, commonly called, the universal or *catholic* church. But the church of England is not, and does not pretend to be, the same with this; tho' the church of *Rome*, from whence she had her original, makes this arrogant claim. And there is a very wide and evident difference between them, not only as the church of England is bounded by much narrower limits than the church of Christ, but as it is a civil or worldly constitution; whereas the church of Christ is a body purely religious † and spiritual, often called in scripture, "the kingdom of heaven."

* Acts xx. 28. Eph. v. 25. &c.
† See the xixth *Article* of the church.

Q. 13. *In what respects does the church of England appear to be a* worldly constitution, *and therefore different from the church of Christ?*

A. 1. Its origin is from the world, it being framed by human authority, and is properly a creature of the state: But the church of Christ is a "kingdom not of this world." John xviii.

2. Its

2. Its members are "men of the world ‡," the whole nation being acknowledged as ſuch: But thoſe of Chriſt's church are holy and pious men, who "have their converſation in Heaven." John xvii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Phil iii. 20.

3. Its laws are of a worldly nature, being founded on acts of parliament, and enforced by mere worldly ſanctions: But the laws of Chriſt's church, are no other than the laws of God, contained in the ſcriptures, and the ſanctions of them are purely ſpiritual. Eph. ii. 20. 2 Cor. x. 4.

4. Its ground of ſupport is the power and riches of the world: But that of Chriſt's church, the power and grace of God. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

5. Its ſupreme head is one of the princes of the world: But the ſupreme and only head of Chriſt's church is Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. Eph. i. 22.

‡ *N. B.* By the application of this ſcripture phraſe (Pſal. xvii. 14.) the author is very far from intending to inſinuate that the members of the church of England are univerſally more men of this world, and that none of them are true chriſtians, (See p. vii. pref.) but only, that it is not their chriſtianity which makes them members of this church; the nation at large being conſidered as ſuch without diſtinction, among whom it muſt be owned are many who are not only groſsly ignorant, but immoral and prophane.

Q. 14. *What* power *has the* King *in the church of England, which conſtitutes him its* ſupreme head, *and the church a* worldly kingdom?

A. The King (or Queen) "is veſted with "all power to exerciſe all manner of eccleſiaſti-"cal juriſdiction; and Archbiſhops, Biſhops, "Archdeacons, and other eccleſiaſtical perſons, "have no manner of juriſdiction eccleſiaſtical,

"but

" but by and under the King's majeſty, who " hath full power and authority to hear and " determine all manner of cauſes eccleſiaſtical, " and to reform and correct all vice, ſin, errors, " hereſies whatſoever *." The appointing of Biſhops alſo is his prerogative, and the power of ordination is derived from him, and held during his pleaſure.

* Theſe are the words of the act 26 Hen. VIII. cap. i. This power Hen. VIII. tranſferred from the Pope to himſelf (when he quarrelled with him about the Queen's divorce), and the Kings and Queens of England have enjoyed it ever ſince.

Q. 15. *What* objection *have Diſſenters to this authority of the King?*

A. Tho' they think it their duty to honour and obey the King in *civil* matters, they apprehend ſuch power as our preſent conſtitution gives him in affairs of *Religion*, to be not only foreign to the province of the civil magiſtrate, but highly derogatory to the honour of Chriſt, whom God hath appointed head over all things to the church, and a groſs infringement on the liberty of chriſtians, who, in matters of faith and conſcience, are forbid being the ſervants of men. 1 Cor. vii. 23.

Q. 16. *May it not be of* ſervice to religion *to have the authority of the chief magiſtrate engaged on its ſide?*

A. The religion of Jeſus does not want the ſupport of human power; his church is founded on a rock, more ſtable than any earthly eſtabliſhment, and the gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it *. The interference of the civil magiſtrate in matters of religion, has often been

* Mat. xvi. 18.

more

more injurious than beneficial, and this authority in matters of faith, is exceedingly dangerous; and indeed the claim is more abſurd, than that of the *Pope* himſelf, who has the pretence of infallibility as the ground of it.

Q. 17. *Have the Kings of England been uſed to* exerciſe *this authority in matters of faith?*

A. Yes; and the Queens alſo, in ſo great a degree as to reverſe the votes of parliaments, and ſtop the proceedings of an whole Convocation of the Clergy. So did Queen *Anne* in the caſe of Mr. *Whiſton*, who was condemned for Hereſy.

Q. 18. *Did religion ever flouriſh in a nation where it was* not eſtabliſhed?

A. The Religion of Jeſus, as eſtabliſhed in the hearts of men, never flouriſhed more than when it had (as at firſt) all the powers of the earth engaged againſt it.

Q. 19. *Was not the* Jewiſh *church national, and as ſuch eſtabliſhed?*

A. The Jewiſh church was doubtleſs *national* *, and *eſtabliſhed* likewiſe; but then it ought to be remembered, it was not eſtabliſhed by the power of the *civil magiſtrate*, but by *Jehovah* himſelf, who was its king and lawgiver; and no human authority was admitted to interfere in the conſtitution or government of it. It is therefore highly unfit to be made the model of a church under ſo different a diſpenſation as the chriſtian is, and never was intended to be ſo.

* It has been remarked by ſome, that the Jewiſh church, tho' national, was partly *congregational* alſo; as all the males, through the whole country, were obliged, at certain ſeaſons to appear at *Jeruſalem*.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Concerning the Officers *appointed in the Church of England.*

Q. 20. *WHAT* Officers *are employed in the church of England under the King, to whom the Diſſenters object?*

A. Archbiſhops, Dioceſan-Biſhops, Archdeacons, Deans, Prebendaries, Canons, Minor Canons, Vicars-general, Commiſſaries, Officials, Chancellors, Surrogates, Proctors, &c. offices which Chriſt never appointed, and which nothing in the New-Teſtament warrants, but are evidently of popiſh original.

Q. 21. *Does not the New-Teſtament ſpeak of* Biſhops *as preſiding in the church?*

A. Yes; but they were no other than the Paſtors of particular congregations, often called *Elders* or *Preſbyters*; which words are evidently uſed as ſynonymous with *Biſhops*, the Greek word * for which plainly ſignifies no more than overſeers.

* Επισκοποι.

Q. 22. *What is the* number, office, *and* authority *of the Biſhops in the church of England?*

A. Beſides the Archbiſhops, who are two, and who preſide over the others, the Biſhops are twenty-four. They have the ſole power of ordaining the clergy, and very great authority over them. They perform the right of confirmation, and conſecrate churches and church-yards. They are alſo inveſted with great ſecular power and dignity.

Q. 23. *What*

Q. 23. *What have you to object to the* ſuperiority *of the Biſhops over the clergy?*

A. No ſuch diſtinction of miniſters is appointed by Chriſt in his church, but on the contrary, he has expreſsly forbidden any of them to aſſume dominion over the reſt*. And as to the office of an *Archbiſhop*, none pretend to produce any ſcripture-warrant for it.

* See Matth. xx. 25—27. But Jeſus called them unto him [viz. the diſciples, when they ſolicited the chief places in his kingdom] and ſaid, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them—but it ſhall not be ſo among *you*; but whoſoever will be great among you let him be your miniſter, and whoſoever will be chief among you let him be your ſervant." Ch. xxiii. 8. "Be ye not called *Rabbi*, for one is your maſter, even Chriſt, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon earth, for one is your father which is in heaven."

N. B. The Biſhops are called *Lords*, and right reverend *Fathers* in God.

Q. 24. *Is there not ſomething exceptionable in the manner of making of a* Biſhop?

A. There is a great deal of pomp and parade in this ceremony, in which there is an election, a confirmation, a conſecration, and an * inſtallment, or inveſtiture; and ſome things in it are truly ludicrous.

v. g. Tho' it is well known that the office is a very deſirable one, and is generally ſought after with great eagerneſs, the Biſhop elect ſolemnly declares againſt having uſed any undue means to obtain it, ſaying *Nolo epiſcopari*, i. e. I am unwilling to be a Biſhop. Previous to the confirmation the Vicar-general iſſues forth a citation to ſummon all who oppoſe the election; which is fixed on the door of Bow-church. And afterwards three proclamations are made in the church for the oppoſers to appear; but none coming they are pronounced *contumaces*. See more in *Nelſon*'s rights of the clergy.

* *N. B.* This in an *Archbiſhop* is called an *Enthronement*.

Q. 25. *What*

Q. 25. *What is objected to in the manner of* ordination *by Bishops?*

A. They require all whom they ordain to declare, that they are moved by the Holy-Ghost, in undertaking the ministerial office; and then pretend (or seem as if they pretended) to confer the Spirit by the imposition of their hands, saying, "Receive the Holy-Ghost."

Q. 26. *Can none officiate as ministers in the church of England, who have not been ordained by* her own Bishops?

A. No; all other ordination is pronounced invalid, excepting that of the Roman Catholics; who, if they conform to the church of England, are not required to be re-ordained.

Q. 27. *What is the common argument for the* exclusive right *of the Bishops to ordain?*

A. That they have derived it by uninterrupted succession from the apostles?

Q. 28. *What is* objected *to this right by* uninterrupted succession?

A. The scriptures no where mention it as necessary to render ordination valid. The church of England cannot prove that she is possessed of it. And if she could, she must have received it through the corrupt channel of the church of Rome.

Q. 29. *What do the* Dissenters *in general think concerning* ordination?

A. They apprehend that every man who is qualified for the ministerial office, by ability and piety, has a right to exercise it in any society that calls him to it; and that ordination is by no means necessary to the useful discharge of it. Accordingly, many of their ministers preach several years before they are ordained. But they

think

think it is very decent and uſeful, and agreeable to the ſcripture model, when they are about to ſettle with any people as paſtors, to have the approbation, the prayers, and the advice of ſome of their brethren; who pretend to no authority to conſtitute them paſtors; that being derived ſolely from Chriſt, and the choice of the people.

Note. Some on theſe occaſions uſe the form of laying on of hands, without pretending to convey any ſpiritual gift; and others diſuſe it.

Q. 30. *What is the* extent *of a Biſhop's charge and authority in the church of England?*

A. Each Biſhop is the paſtor of the whole Dioceſe, and has the charge of all the ſouls in it, and the government of all the clergy, who are really only his curates; which is a truſt far too great for any man to execute, as each Dioceſe comprehends ſome hundred pariſhes.

N. B. The Biſhop of London's Dioceſe, comprehends all the clergy and members of the church of England, in *America.*

Q. 31. *What is the authority of a Biſhop over his* clergy?

A. He not only has authority to enquire into their conduct, to exhort them to their duty, and to demand an oath of obedience to himſelf, according to the canons; but alſo the power of ſuſpenſion; which is too great for one man to be entruſted with, and may be attended with very pernicious conſequences.

Q. 32. *What is the nature and deſign of the rite of* Confirmation, *as performed by the Biſhops?*

A. It is deſigned for young perſons to take upon themſelves the vow which their Sponſors made in their name at their baptiſm.

Q. 33. *What*

Q. 33. *What does the Bishop* perform *on these occasions?*

A. He thanks God for having regenerated them by water and the Holy Ghost, and forgiven all their sins. He then lays his hand upon the head of every person, and "certifies them "all, by that sign, of God's favour, and gracious "goodness toward them."

Q. 34. *What is* required *of persons in order to their being thus confirmed?*

A. Nothing more than their having a certificate from their minister, that they can say the Lord's-prayer, the creed, the ten commandments, and the catechism; and their answering, *all together*, in the affirmative, to the Question, which is read of course, "whether they "renew the vows made in their name at their "Baptism?"

Q. 35. *What do Dissenters* object *to this ceremony?*

A. That it has no foundation in reason, or scripture *, and is attended with very dangerous consequences. Besides, should the propriety of the rite itself be allowed, every parish minister seems to be as capable of performing it as a Bishop.

* The principal text urged in favour of confirmation, is nothing to the purpose, viz. Acts viii. 14, &c. which refers to the extraordinary gifts conferred by Peter and John. The confirmation spoken of ch. xiv. 22. and xv. 41. was not by imposition of hands, but by *preaching*.

Q. 36. *What* dangerous consequence *is likely to arise from it?*

A. Ignorant people, who have too good an opinion of the Bishop to think he would declare a falsehood, are like to look upon themselves to be, what he has declared they are, pardoned,

regenerated, and interested in God's favour, and so conclude their state is safe, while yet they continue in their sins.

Q. 37. *What do Dissenters object to the* consecration *of* churches *and* burying-grounds *by the Bishop?*

A. They think that no ceremony can make one place more holy than another; that if it could, the common priests are as able to perform it as the Bishops, and that their pretensions of this nature tend greatly to promote a superstitious veneration for the places so consecrated, as well as for themselves.

Q. 38. *What is that* secular power *and* dignity *with which the Bishops are invested?*

A. They have their respective courts of judicature held in their cathedrals, and issue out writs, not in the King's name, (as other courts do) but in their own. They depute Chancellors to act as Judges; whose jurisdiction extends to all causes concerning marriages, last wills, administrations, &c. as well as to persons accused of various crimes, on which they pass sentence without a jury, and for which they inflict very heavy secular punishments. The Bishops also are Lords of Parliament, and as such have a seat in the house of Lords.

Some maintain that they are Peers of the Realm. See *Nelson*, p. 104, — 108. 3d edit. The Bishoprick of *Durham* has for many centuries been a *County Palatine*. The *Earldom* of *Sadberg* is also annexed to this Bishoprick. The Archbishop of *Canterbury* is Primate and Metropolitan of all England, and next in dignity to the royal family. He has the probate of all wills in his province. When any die intestate, having goods in several dioceses, the administration belongs to him. (Ib. p. 61.) "It is his privilege, by custom, to crown the kings and queens of England. He has also (by the Stat. 25. Hen. VIII. ch. 21.) the

" the power of granting *dispensations*, in any case not con-
" trary to the holy scriptures and the law of God, where
" the *Pope* used formerly to grant them. Which is the
" foundation of his granting special licences to marry at
" any place or time, to hold two livings, and to confer
" degrees in prejudice of the universities, &c." *(Black-
stone's Comment.* Vol. I. p. 381.) " The Archbishop of
" *Canterbury* has indeed, by the laws of England, such
" extensive powers, that ever since the death of Laud,
" the government has thought proper to raise to that dig-
" nity none but men of very moderate principles, and of
" very inoffensive abilities."

Guthrie's Geog. Gram. p. 189.

Q. 39. *What is* objected *to this dignity and power of the Bishops?*

A. It is not very consistent with their characters as the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus, or with their pretensions as the successors of the Apostles, whose weapons of warfare were not carnal *, and who affected no external pomp or worldly power †. It must greatly interfere with the spiritual duties ‡ of their office; and is not agreeable to the free spirit of the English civil constitution.

* 2 Cor. x. 4. † 1 Cor. iv. 1, 10—13. ‡ Acts vi. 2, 4.

SECTION III.

Of the LITURGY.

Q. 40. *WHAT is the* mode of worship *in the established Church?*

A. A form of prayer is statedly used, called the Liturgy, or Common-prayer.

Q. 41. *Do Diſſenters think forms of prayer in themſelves* ſinful?

A. No; they think it far better to pray by a form than not at all, or in an indecent incoherent manner; but do not approve of a miniſter's uſing a Liturgy, or ſtated form in public worſhip.

Note. Many diſſenting miniſters have drawn up forms as helps to the devotion of the family and cloſet, and many of the people uſe them as they ſee occaſion.

Q. 42. *What are the* objections *commonly urged againſt* Liturgies *in general?*

A. 1. The ſcripture is ſilent with reſpect to the neceſſity or expediency of them, and refers to none in uſe, though it treats largely on divine worſhip, and often mentions the prayers of good men.

2. It ſeems highly unreaſonable, that chriſtian miniſters ſhould be confined to a ſtated form in their prayers, more than in their ſermons.

3. The uſe of ſuch a form is attended with many diſadvantages, both to miniſters and people.

Q. 43. *What are the principal* diſadvantages *of a Liturgy?*

A. 1. It is an encouragement to indolence in miniſters.

2. It tends to leſſen their ability for praying in caſes of emergency, for which no form can be provided.

3. The conſtant repetition of the ſame things tends to deaden the affections of the worſhippers.

4. Liturgies cannot be adapted to all the circumſtances of different ſocieties, and the ſeveral

veral events which may occur, and which ought o be noticed in public prayer.

Q. 44. *What is objected to the Liturgy of the* church of England *in particular?*

A. 1. That it is impoſed by human authority, ſo that miniſters muſt make no variation from it, whatever the peculiar circumſtances of things may require; and no alteration can be made in it, however proper and neceſſary, without an act of parliament, which cannot eaſily be procured.

2. That there are many things exceptionable in the liturgy itſelf. e. g. in the general form and conſtruction of it---in the ſentiment and expreſſion in ſeveral particular parts---and alſo in reſpect to language.

3. That the manner of reciting it is unnatural and unedifying, eſpecially in the cathedrals.

Q. 45. *What is exceptionable in the* general form and conſtruction *of the Liturgy?*

A. 1. The method is irregular and confuſed.—The ſeveral prayers, collects, &c. are without any order or connexion. And they are ſo placed as to require ſome ſkill to find them as they are read, and to make it neceſſary to ſkip backwards and forwards ſeveral times in reading one ſervice.

2. The parts into which it is divided are too many and too minute.—Some of the diſtinct prayers, and eſpecially the collects *, ſeem to have no diſtinguiſhing object, but are little more than introduction and concluſion.

* v. g. Col. for 2d Sunday after Epiph. 2d before Lent; 3d 4th, and 5th in Lent.

3. It is full of tautology and vain repetitions.

"Lord have mercy upon us," and *gloria patri*, are introduced much too frequently. The Lord's-prayer is used three or four times, and may occur *six* times in the same service. In the Litany, "Have mercy upon us miserable sin-"ners," is said eight times: "Good Lord de-"liver us," eight times also: and, "We be-"seech thee to hear us good Lord," twenty-one.

See Matth. vi. 7.

4. It is in some views very defective.---The confession is much too general; as indeed are the petitions and thanksgivings. And some cases are not provided for. It is remarkable there is no prayer for the universities.

5. The prayers are not always adapted to the occasion.---There is a remarkable instance of this sort in the service for (what is strangely called) the *churching of women:* "O Lord save this "woman thy servant---Be thou to her a strong "tower from the face of *her enemy*." The same in the visitation of the sick.---The 3d Collect for evening prayer, "Lighten our darkness, &c." is improper when read, as it often is, early in the afternoon: As likewise is that expression in the morning service, "Who hast brought us "to the *beginning* of this day," when read near noon, or as sometimes it is, past it. (See *Cand. Disq.* p. 115.)

6. Many of the prayers are needless and redundant. e. g. Several of the Collects, in which no blessing is asked but what is prayed for in other parts of the service. The prayers for the King and Royal Family are disproportioned to the other parts of intercession.

Note, The King is prayed for three times every Sunday morning, and again in the communion service, besides in each of the forms appointed for solemn days.

7. There

7. There is only *one* general form of prayer appointed; the conſtant uſe of which at all times, morning and evening, is very unreaſonable, and muſt tend greatly to promote formality.

Q. 46. *What is there exceptionable as to* ſentiment *in particular parts of the Liturgy?*

A. 1. *In the Office of* BAPTISM.

Such expreſſions are uſed concerning the efficacy of that rite, as naturally lead perſons to conceive of it as a ſaving ordinance *: which however is rendered ridiculous by the queſtions put to the Infant in the perſon of the ſponſors, and the anſwers they make in its name, concerning its faith and future conduct †.

* God is thanked for having regenerated the child by his Holy Spirit. The water is called the laver of regeneration, by which the child, being born in original ſin and in the wrath of God, is received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlaſting life. Accordingly, in the *Catechiſm*, the child is taught to ſay of its baptiſm, "Wherein I was made a member of Chriſt, "a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." A ſentiment as dangerous as it is unreaſonable and unſcriptural.

† Q. *Doſt thou in the name of this child renounce the devil and all his works*, &c.? *Anſ.* I renounce them all. Q. *Doſt thou believe in God*, &c.? *Anſ.* All this I ſtedfaſtly believe. Q. *Wilt thou be baptized in this faith? Anſ.* That is my deſire. Q. *Wilt thou keep God's holy will*, &c *Anſw.* I will.

2. *In the* COMMUNION-SERVICE.

Some expreſſions ſtrongly favour the notion of Chriſt's real preſence in the bread and wine *: a ſuperſtitious regard to which is encouraged by the uſe of the term *Conſecration*; and particularly, by the repetition of the conſecration-prayer, if the firſt quantity be not ſufficient †.

* " Grant us therefore to eat the flesh of thy dear Son " Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, &c." When the minister gives the bread he says, " The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul:" and when giving the cup, " The blood of " our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul," &c.

† The order of the rubric, respecting the bread and wine that is left, savours strongly of popish superstition, and appears somewhat ludicrous.

" If any of the bread and wine remain unconsecrated, the curate shall have it to his own use; but if any remain of that " which was consecrated, it shall not be carried out of the " church, but the priest, and such other of the communicants as " he shall then call unto him, shall immediately after the " blessing, *reverently eat and drink the same.*

3. *In the* VISITATION *of the* SICK.

After the sick person has declared his assent to the articles of the creed, and professed his repentance and his charity with all men, he is to be " moved to make a special confession of his " sins, if he feel his conscience troubled."—After which confession, the Priest is required, " if he humbly and heartily desire it," to *absolve him.*

The form of absolution is really shocking and downright Popery. " Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church " to absolve all sinners, who truly repent and believe in him, of " his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by *his authority* committed to *me, I absolve thee from all thy sins,* in the name " of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*"

4. *In the* BURIAL SERVICE.

This one service is read at all funerals, without distinction; whatever the age, circumstances, or character, of the deceased, may be; yea, tho' they are known to have been the most abandoned Sinners, and hardened Infidels, and to have died without

without any signs of repentance; excepting they were unbaptized, self-murderers, or *excommunicated*; which last case very rarely happens.—In this service, the Minister is required to stile the deceased, "Our dear brother"—to express a "sure and certain hope of his resurrection to "eternal life—to thank God for having taken "him out of the miseries of this sinful world"—and to pray "that when we depart this life, we "may rest in Christ, as our hope is this our dear "brother doth:"——Expressions, which (during the present relaxation of *church-discipline)* must often hurt the consciences of ministers*, and be attended with very dangerous consequences with respect to the people. No wonder if wicked persons should encourage themselves to go on in sin, on the presumption of obtaining happiness at last, notwithstanding, while they so often hear persons of their own character, when dead, pronounced happy.

* On account of this Office, Archbish p *Sancroft* (as he told Dr. *Tillotson)* would never undertake the cure of souls. See Cal. Life Baxt. Vol. IV. p. 226.

5. *In some of the Services for* HOLY-DAYS.

Particularly that for January 30, and May 29. In the former of which, the death of Charles I. and in the latter, the restoration of Charles II. are commemorated in a manner founded on falsehood, and bordering upon prophaneness.

On Jan. 30. Charles I. is absurdly styled a *Martyr*. A character is given him much greater than (from his History) he appears to deserve; and, his death lamented, the guilt of it confessed, and the Judgments of God on account of it deprecated, in a manner highly unjustifiable, even supposing his character was what it is represented. But the most shocking part of the service is, the reading of the Psalms which relate to the *sufferings of Christ*, and the chapter concerning his crucifixion.

The thanksgivings offered May 29, for the reſtoration of Charles II. as "our moſt gracious ſovereign;" and for reſtoring "to us [by him] the publick and free profeſſion of God's *true* "religion and worſhip—his ſacred truth and goſpel, to the great "comfort and joy of our hearts;" are ſuch as we cannot heartily join in when we think of the vices of his character, his attempts againſt the liberties of this country, and the immoralities and perſecutions of his reign; unleſs we believed there was and could be no public and free profeſſion of God's true religion, &c. without the hierarchy and liturgy of the church of England.

6. *In ſome of the* PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE *appointed to be read.*

Thoſe with which the ſervice begins, (which are the ſame for the morning and afternoon) are by no means ſo pertinent as many that might be found. The Leſſons are not always well choſen for edification. An whole chapter is ſometimes read on a particular occaſion, in which there are but a few words at all adapted to it. The Song of the virgin Mary and of Simeon, which are made a part of the worſhip in Evening-prayer, are too perſonal for a congregation to adopt. There ſeems to be no propriety in reading the Epiſtles and Goſpels as diſtinct from Leſſons, and eſpecially, in reading ſome other portion of ſcripture, when there is no goſpel or epiſtle ſuitable, as *for the goſpel*, or *for the epiſtle*.

7. *In the uſe of the* APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.

From whence Leſſons are appointed to be publickly read, and that in the room of ſome part of the ſacred writings; which tends to make people think the Apocrypha of equal authority with the Bible. Some of theſe leſſons contain the moſt ridiculous ſtories in the whole book*.

* v. g. The fabulous and groſs legends of Bel and the *Dragon*, of *Judith* and *Suſannah*; and above all, the magical romance

romance of relieving a fair virgin from the inchantments of her infernal lover, and conjuring away the amorous devil *Asmodeus*, by the fumes of a fish's liver.

See *Dissent. Gent.* p. 101.

N. B. The story of *Bel* and the *Dragon* was first appointed to be read by the Common-Prayer-book of *Charles* II.

8. *In the* ATHANASIAN CREED.

This creed (which was taken verbatim from the *Mass-book*) is expressed in such a manner, as seems not calculated to support the doctrine it pretends to explain. The damnatory clauses of it are particularly exceptionable, and render the church highly inconsistent, as she admits persons to her communion without requiring their belief of it, and expresses her hope of the salvation of all over whom the burial service is read, tho' they understand nothing of the doctrine contained in this creed, or are known to deny it.

9. *In some parts of the* LITANY.

e. g. "From fornication and all other *deadly* "*sins*, good Lord deliver us:" which seems to countenance the popish notion of some sins being venial. Some cannot pray to be delivered "from sudden death," because they think it a benefit; and others, because they judge it fittest to leave it to a wise and good God to determine the manner of their dying.

A much *better* petition than either of these was *left out* of the *Litany*, at the review in Queen *Elizabeth*'s time, which consistent Protestants could much more generally adopt: "*From the* "*Bishop of* ROME, *and all his detestable enor-*"*mities*, good Lord deliver us."

Q. 47. *What is objected against in the* manner of reciting *the Liturgy?*

A. The chanting it, as in the cathedrals, is unsuitable

unſuitable to the nature of prayer, and the ſimplicity of Goſpel-worſhip*. And the manner in which the people join with the prieſt, in the pariſh-churches, is unedifying, unnatural, and arbitrary: ſometimes making reſponſes ‡ to the petitions he offers: ſometimes repeating a prayer along with him: ſometimes ſaying broken parts of ſentences after him: ſometimes concluding the ſentences he had begun: and in the pſalms, he and they reading a verſe alternately.

* *Chanting* was firſt introduced in the church of *Antioch* by *Flavianus*, a man of looſe morals, but fond of ceremonies. The church of *Rome* adopted it, where it was improved under ſeveral Popes, and was compleated in the time of *Gregory*, about the year 620, and from him intitled, the Gregorian cant. Auſtin the Monk brought it into England. Pope *Vitalian* I. (683) firſt appointed organs to be uſed with the vocal muſic.

Differt. on Cathed. Worſhip in *Comp. Hiſt. Ref.*

‡ Reſponſes are uſed in no other proteſtant church. Theſe alſo were introduced by Pope *Gregory*.

Q. 48. *How is it to be* accounted for *that there are ſo many exceptionable things in the Liturgy?*

A. The plain reaſon is, it was taken for the moſt part from the old *popiſh liturgy* †; from

† *Calderwood* in his *Church Hiſt.* ſays, That the Common-prayer is little elſe than a tranſlation of ſeveral parcels put together of the *Roman Breviary*, *Miſſal*, and *Ritual*. Theſe 6 Canticles are word for word from the *Maſs-book*. *Benedicite omnia*. *Benedictus Dom. Magnificat. Nunc dimittis. Quicunque vult*, (or the *Athanaſian* creed) and *Te Deum*, with *Gloria Patri* after every pſalm.—When, therefore, the *Devonſhire men* were ſtirred up to rebellion, on account of the alteration of their *Maſs-book*, King *Edward* VI. tells them in a Letter, to quiet them, "As "for the ſervice in the Engliſh tongue, it perchance ſeems to "you a *new* ſervice, but yet indeed it is *no other but the old: the ſelf-ſame words* in Engliſh." Accordingly, ſome of the *Popes* offered to confirm the Engliſh Liturgy.

See *Delaune's* Plea, 47—52.

which

which the first Reformers prudently made as little variation as possible, intending by degrees, to effect a thorough reform. But their successors unaccountably rested satisfied with what they had done, and have made no material alteration since. Our church-governors, either thro' indifference, or an unreasonable * aversion to innovations, or an apprehension of endangering the whole church by repairing a part of it, have hitherto rejected the proposals of many learned clergymen † in the church, (as well as the Presbyterian ministers, in 1661.) for improving the established forms.

* See a curious instance of this in *Furn.* Lett. to *Blackstone*, p. 89.

† See the *Free and candid Disquisitions relating to the church of England*, printed in the year 1749. addressed to our governors in church and state, more especially to the Convocation; by dutiful sons of the said church. In which a great number of alterations in the Liturgy are very sensibly and modestly proposed.

Q. 49. *In what manner is the public worship of the Dissenters conducted?*

A. By extemporary prayer, or, as it is sometimes called, free-prayer; in which the minister prays according to his own judgment and ability, without the help of a Book.

Q. 50. *What* warrant *have they from* Scripture *for this way of praying?*

A. It was evidently in use long before Liturgies were or could be; for men had prayed to God two thousand years before any books were written. And there are many examples of extemporary prayer in the sacred writings. The Patriarchs and Prophets under the Old Testament, Christ and his Apostles under the New, and good men in general under both, evidently prayed in this manner.

Q. 51. *What*

Q. 51. *What are the chief* advantages *of extemporary prayer?*

A. 1. It obliges miniſters (who uſe it in a proper manner) to an habit of diligence in converſing with divine things.

2. It tends greatly to keep up the attention, and excite the pious affections of the worſhippers.

3. It is capable of being beſt ſuited to the circumſtances of the congregation, and the various ſudden occurrences that may happen, which ought not to paſs unnoticed in public devotion.

Q. 52. *How can* the people join *in extemporary prayer, ſince they muſt wait till the miniſter has finiſhed a ſentence before they can underſtand the meaning of it?*

A. 1. In order properly to join in prayer with another, it is not neceſſary to adopt every word as it is uttered; it is ſufficient to aſſent to a petition when the whole is delivered.

2. However, thoſe prayers which are called extemporary, are not (and ought not to be) always entirely *new:* many of the ſame expreſſions will often occur, and eſpecially ſcripture expreſſions, which may generally be underſtood and aſſented to, as ſoon as a few words are uttered.

3. The ſame objection would in ſome degree, hold equally good againſt hearing new ſermons.

Q. 53. *Are not extemporary prayers liable to* great improprieties *in method and expreſſion?*

A. It is allowed, they are not always ſo accurate as forms might be made. But perſons of good natural abilities and education, may, by diligent care and conſtant uſe, acquire an habit of

of expreſſing themſelves with a degree of accuracy ſufficient for all the purpoſes of ſocial devotion. And churchmen ought to remember that there are many improprieties in the *common-prayer* *, equal to moſt that are obſervable in the prayers of the regular Diſſenters.

Q. 54. *But*

* Beſides the improprieties in the Liturgy before remarked, (Q. 45.) it may not be amiſs here to ſelect ſome others in reſpect to language only.

Uncouth and obſolete words and phraſes. " *Prevent* us in all our doings.—Let thy mercy *lighten* upon us —Ordered by thy *Governance*.—Thine *honourable* and *true* ſon.—That we be *fulfilled* with thy grace —Thoſe things which we aſk *faithfully*. —May do ſuch things as be *rightful*.—For the *more* confirmation of the faith.—Thro' our ſins and wickedneſs we be *ſore let* and hindered.—Thy late *plague* of immoderate rain.—The ſpirit of *ghoſtly* ſtrength.—Great *marvels*.—*Deadly* ſins, &c.

Beſides theſe, many occur in the verſion of the *Pſalms* read in the church, (which is done from the *vulgate Latin*, and in which there are ſeveral groſs miſtranſlations) e. g. " Tuſh. —Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.—Thou art my *worſhip*.—He is an *wholeſome* defence. — Bleſſed are the *folk*. — The time thou haſt *plagued* us. —O thou *moſt higheſt*. — With trumpets and *ſhawms*. —We have wiſhed you *good luck*.—How ſweet are thy words unto my *throat*.—I will bleſs her *victuals*, &c. &c.

Redundancies. " Acknowledge and confeſs.—Not diſſemble nor *cloak* them.—Pardoneth and abſolveth.—Vanquiſh and overcome.—Worthily deſerved.—Graciouſly hear us, O Chriſt, graciouſly hear us, O Lord Chriſt. *(See the end of the Litany.)* We praiſe thee, we bleſs thee, we worſhip thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father Almighty." *Communion Service.*

Want of Connexion; particularly between the *Addreſs* and the *Petition*.—" Give peace in our time, O Lord, *becauſe* there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.—O God who art the author of *peace* and lover of *concord*, in knowledge of whom, &c. defend us thy humble ſervants in all aſſaults, &c. —Almighty and everlaſting God, who alone worketh *great marvels*, ſend down upon our Biſhops and Curates, the healthful ſpirit of thy *grace*." In this laſt inſtance the connexion unhappily ſuggeſts,

Q. 54. *But is it not requiſite that chriſtians ſhould maintain* uniformity *in their worſhip?*

A. Uniformity is no more neceſſary in prayer than in preaching. If it were, Chriſt himſelf would have told us ſo, and the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians would have maintained it; which there is not the leaſt proof of their doing. And it ſeems ſtrange that uniformity ſhould be thought more neceſſary in prayer than in preaching, or in other things, in which variety is eſteemed beautiful.

Q. 55. *Did not Chriſt teach his diſciples* to pray by a form, *called the* Lord's-prayer?

ſuggeſts, what the compilers cannot be thought to have intended, viz. that it is a marvellous thing for Curates, and even Biſhops, to have grace.

Abſurd or Unintelligible. "By the myſtery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumciſion, by thy baptiſm, faſting, and temptation. &c. Good Lord deliver us.—Haſt given us grace in the power of the divine majeſty to worſhip the unity. —Thoſe things, which for our unworthineſs we dare not aſk, vouchſafe to give us.—Thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only O Chriſt, with the holy Ghoſt, art moſt high in the Glory of God the Father. Amen."——In one of the prayers in the communion ſervice, God is ſtiled *Holy Father*.— But the rubric orders that on *Trinity Sunday* this title ſhall be omitted; as if God was not *Holy Father* that day as much as any other.

From this ſpecimen of faults in the eſtabliſhed Liturgy it appears, that churchmen have not quite ſo much cauſe to boaſt of its perfection, and its ſuperiority to extemporary prayers, even in point of expreſſion, as a ſtranger might be ready to imagine. And it ſhould be conſidered, that in the latter caſe improprieties, when obſerved may be avoided in time to come; but in the former, the faults are eſtabliſhed as well as the forms even by thoſe who perceive and acknowledge them.

A. It is not generally allowed, that our Lord intended this prayer of his to be always uſed in his

his church as a Form, but is by many considered as a Directory for our prayers*. However, if it could be proved that it was designed as a standing form, this does not warrant the use of a *Liturgy*, drawn up by fallible men, much less the imposition of it by the civil magistrate.

* "In this manner (ουτως) pray ye." Matth. vi. 9.

SECTION IV.

Concerning Ceremonies.

Q. 56. *WHAT is the opinion of the Dissenters with respect to* ceremonies *in divine worship?*

A. They disapprove of such as are of mere human invention, especially when made necessary, as those of the church of England are, and think themselves bound to refuse complying with them.

Q. 57. *Are the ceremonies of the church of England* forbidden in scripture?

A. They are not expressly forbidden in scripture, (because they were not in use early enough) but all *Will-worship*†is, of which these are one kind; and as they are not *commanded* there, that is a sufficient reason for refusing to submit to them.

Q. 58. *Does not the church* claim authority *to decree rites and ceremonies in divine worship?*

A. Yes‡; but Dissenters deny the claim, and cannot submit to any of her ceremonies, till she can prove her authority to enjoin them from scripture.

† See Col. ii. 23. ‡ See Article xx.

Q. 59. *Is*

Q. 59. *Is nothing to be required in the worſhip of God but what is* commanded in ſcripture?

A. Nothing but what is either expreſsly commanded, or neceſſarily implied in a command.

Q. 60. *Are not the ceremonies of the church* indifferent in themſelves? *Where then can be the* harm *of complying with them?*

A. Tho' they be allowed indifferent in themſelves, they may not be ſo in all the circumſtances of them; and if they are, they ceaſe to be ſo, when enjoined by human authority*, and made the terms of Chriſtian communion.

* To this purpoſe the words of the Apoſtle are remarkable, 1 Cor. vi. 12. "All things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." See, on this head, *Furneaux*'s incomparable *Letters* to *Blackſtone*, p. 156--160. 2d Edit.

Q. 61. *Where can be the evil of ſubmitting to* human authority *in things indifferent, for the ſake of peace and uniformity?*

A. It would be acknowledging in thoſe who have aſſumed the office of governors in the church, a right which Chriſt never gave them, the pretenſion to which is derogatory to his honour; and it would be giving up that "liberty wherewith Chriſt has made us free," and in which he has exhorted us to "ſtand faſt." Gal. v. 1.

Q. 62. *Are we not commanded to* "let all "things be done decently and in order?" *May not, therefore, the heads of the church, appoint whatever is neceſſary thereunto?*

A. All chriſtians muſt judge for themſelves what is decent and orderly. Some think thoſe things to be ſo, which others deem the reverſe. And no perſons whatſoever have a right to determine

termine for any but themſelves, for we own no heads of the Church upon Earth.

Q. 63. *Are any* bad conſequences *likely to ariſe from thoſe* few *ceremonies, which the* church of England has appointed?

A. They can do no good, and may be abuſed to bad purpoſes. They tend to deſtroy the ſimplicity of divine worſhip; they encourage ſuperſtition, and lead the way to Popery, which abounds with human inventions.

Q. 64. *But does not the church of England* diſclaim *the errors of* Popery?

A. It does ſo in words, but not in fact, ſo long as it claims authority in matters of faith, or a right to decree ceremonies. Thoſe ceremonies which it uſes are evidently of Popiſh original, and upon the ſame principle that it adopts theſe it might admit all the reſt.

Q. 65. *What are the* ceremonies *uſed in the church of England?*

A. 1. Bowing towards the Eaſt. 2. Bowing at the name of Jeſus. 3. Signing with a Croſs in baptiſm. 4. Particular Geſtures in worſhip, eſpecially kneeling at the Lord's-Supper.

Q. 66. *What is the ceremony of* bowing to the Eaſt?

A. The communion-table (which is called the altar, and is encloſed with rails) is placed at the eaſt-end of the church; and to that, rigid churchmen almoſt univerſally turn their faces, from all other parts, when they ſay the Creed, and bow when they come to the name of Jeſus; as ſome of them alſo do when they come into and go out of the church.

N. B. This ceremony is not enjoined by any canon of the church now in being, but is as generally uſed, and as ſtrenuouſly defended as if it were.——— Archbiſhop *Laud* commanded

commanded it to be uſed, and ſeverely puniſhed thoſe that refuſed to do it.

Q. 67. *What do Diſſenters* object *to this ceremony?*

A. 1. That chriſtian churches are to have no altars‖, but only a convenient table at which to adminiſter the Lord's-ſupper.

2. That there is no reaſon why this ſhould be placed in the eaſtern part of the building, that being no more ſacred than any other. Nor was it ſo placed, after the Reformation, but in the body of the church till *Laud*'s time.

3. That the communion-table has no more ſanctity in it than any other table, and that the cuſtom of bowing towards it had its riſe in Popery, which teaches, that the bread and wine placed upon it, are the very body and blood of Chriſt; which the church of England profeſſes*, with all other Proteſtants, to deny.

4. That bowing the body in any particular part of divine worſhip is an unſcriptural ceremony, and ſavours of ſuperſtition †.

5. Worſhipping towards the Eaſt, ſeems to have been an old heathen cuſtom, which the ſcripture expreſsly condemns‡.

‖ The primitive chriſtians had no altars: Pope *Sylveſter* firſt conſecrated them. A. D. 1334

* Not indeed quite *conſiſtently*, while ſome expreſſions in the Liturgy remain. See p. 43.———The Catechiſm ſays, "the *thing ſignified* in the Lord's Supper is, *the* "*body and* "*blood of Chriſt*, which are *verily and indeed* taken and received by the faithful."

Q. 68. *Does not the* ſcripture *expreſsly require that* "at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould "bow? §

† Col. ii. 18. ‡ See Ezek. viii. 16. § Phil. ii. 10.

A. That

A. That paſſage of ſcripture cannot reaſonably be taken in a literal ſenſe, and therefore does not authorize the practice of bowing, when the name of Jeſus is mentioned.

Q. 69. *How doth this appear?*

A. 1. It is highly unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that if ſuch a ceremony were proper or uſeful, it ſhould be performed in honour of the Son, and not of the Father alſo; or at the mention of the name Jeſus, and not of any other of the names by which the Son of God is as frequently called, or in ſome particular parts of public ſervice, and not at all times when this name is pronounced.

2. If any part of this text is to be literally taken, the whole of it ought to be ſo, which is too abſurd to be admitted; for it is there required alſo, that "every tongue ſhould confeſs "that Chriſt is Lord, of things in heaven and "on earth, and under the earth."

3. That church people themſelves do not practiſe according to the literal ſenſe of this text, for none of them (except the women) bow the knee, but the head. And

4. Some learned and zealous Divines* of the church have given up this text as not to the preſent purpoſe.

* Dr. *Nichols* in particular.

Some, to obviate the objection againſt the church of England, on account of this ceremony, have urged that it is not enjoined, but is founded only in cuſtom; but this is a miſtake. In the *Injunctions* publiſhed by Queen *Elizabeth*, A. D. 1559, is the following, "It is to be neceſſarily received, that "whenſoever the name of Jeſus ſhall be, in any leſſon, ſermon, or, otherwiſe, pronounced, that due reverence be "made of all perſons young and old, with lowneſs of courteſie, and uncovering of heads of the man-kind, as thereunto doth neceſſarily belong, and heretofore hath been accuſtomed." Injunct. 52.

Q. 70. *What*

Q. 70. *What is the pretence for the Prieſt's* croſſing the forehead *in baptiſm?*

A. It is ſaid to be done as a token, that the perſon baptized "ſhall not be aſhamed to con- "feſs the faith of Chriſt crucified, and manfully "to fight under his banner."

Q. 71. *What do Diſſenters* object *to this ceremony?*

A. 1. That Chriſt never appointed it.

2. If the mark of a croſs muſt be uſed as a badge of a diſciple of Chriſt, it ought either to be viſible and permanent, or often repeated, as it is by the Papiſts, who frequently croſs themſelves to remind them of their character.

3. To uſe this ſign in baptiſm is to make two ſacraments of one, according to the church's definition of a ſacrament, as "an outward and viſible "ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace." Moreover

4. To uſe any ceremony in baptiſm as a token of the croſs (or ſufferings) of Chriſt, is to make this ordinance interfere with the Lord's ſupper; in which bread and wine are divinely appointed with this ſpecial deſign.

5. Making this ceremony eſſential to the adminiſtration of baptiſm, is an unreaſonable and unjuſt impoſition on the conſciences of thoſe who might ſcruple it.

Q. 72. *What is there exceptionable in the church reſpecting* Geſtures *in divine worſhip?*

A. The church authoritatively requires the people to be continually changing their poſtures; to ſtand in particular parts of the ſervice, to kneel in others, and to ſit in others, when neither ſcripture nor reaſon point out the difference*; and ſometimes preſcribes the Prieſt a different poſture from the people.

* The

* The moſt unaccountable inſtance of this kind is, the order to *ſit* when the *Epiſtles* are read, and to *ſtand* at the reading of the *Goſpels*.

Q. 73. *Is not the poſture of* kneeling *(which is the moſt reverent) the beſt ſuited to that moſt ſolemn ordinance of the* Lord's-ſupper?

A. If ſo, our Saviour certainly knew it, and he would doubtleſs have enjoined it, or taught us to uſe it by practiſing it with his diſciples, when he firſt inſtituted the ordinance.

Q. 74. *Is it certain that the poſture of the* Diſſenters *is the ſame with that which our* Lord *and his* diſciples *uſed?*

A. No; but it is certain they uſed the ſame poſture with that in which they received their common meals*. The Diſſenters therefore think that as ſitting is the common table-poſture now, they come the neareſt to our Saviour's pattern in uſing it at his table. This is moſt ſuitable to the idea of the Lord's-ſupper as a feaſt; and it was doubtleſs the converting the table into an *altar*, that introduced the cuſtom of kneeling at it †.

* *viz.* The recumbing poſture; which was, lying on beds round the table, ſupporting themſelves by leaning with the left elbow upon it.

† Pope *Honorious* ordained it. A. D. 1214.

Q. 75. *But why ſhould Diſſenters object to ſo* trifling a ceremony *as kneeling at the ſacrament, ſince they do not ſcruple kneeling in prayer?*

A. 1. They cannot think it a trifling ceremony, when, as enjoined by the church, it looks greatly like the adoration of the elements, and took its riſe from the popiſh adoration of them, as the very body and blood of Chriſt.

2. Beſides, the church of England *impoſes* the kneeling

kneeling poſture as a neceſſary term of communion, and for this reaſon alone (ſuppoſing it indifferent in itſelf)) it ought not to be ſubmitted to.

Q. 76. *Do not the* Diſſenters *make it a term of communion to receive ſitting?*

A. No; the communicants among them are entirely at liberty to uſe the poſture they like beſt, and ſome few of them kneel.

Q. 77. *Are not there ſome* other ceremonies *obſerved in the church of England?*

A. There are ſeveral cuſtoms which greatly partake of the nature of ceremonies, and are liable to much the ſame objections: e. g. Wearing particular habits—Obſerving certain days as holy—Performing different parts of the ſervice in different places—And the uſe of Sponſors in baptiſm. All which are mere human and arbitrary appointments.

Q. 78. *What is exceptionable in reſpect to* habits?

A. The clergy are required to wear garments of a particular colour and form, according to their different orders. Beſides the common black robes, the biſhops wear a pair of large lawn ſleeves; and the inferior clergy, whenever they read the prayers, or adminiſter the ſacraments, or other rites, are obliged to have on the *Surplice*, which is made of white linen, as an emblem of purity; which, if there be a ſermon, is worn over the gown and caſſock, and taken off, in the deſk, when the prayers are ended.

Q. 79. *What is* the opinion *of the* Diſſenters *concerning theſe habits?*

A. They conſider them as relicks of popiſh ſuperſtition, eſpecially the * ſurplice, and the change

change of raiment in the time of divine service. But they especially object to the imposition of any kind of dress in the worship of God; tho' they do not conceive of any one form, or colour of a garment, as in itself sinful more than another.

Note, The Surplice was first worn by *Pagan* priests, and was brought into the church of *Rome* by Pope *Adrian*, A. D. 796.

Q. 80. *What* days *doth the church appoint to be kept* holy?

A. No less than 150 in the year *, besides the Lord's-day. v. g. 29 Feasts, 16 vigils (or fasts before holy-days) 40 fasts in Lent, 12 Ember-days, 3 Rogation-days, 4 Solemn days, and all Fridays in the year, (excepting Christmas-day) which besides those in Lent, are 46.

* See the Calendar and Table of Feasts, &c. If it be said, these days are not all designed to be kept holy, it is replied, the 13th Canon as strictly enjoins the celebration of them as of the Lord's-day. If it be now thought needless to keep them, why are they not abolished?

N. B. The Rubric in the Communion-service requires the Curate, immediately after reading the *Nicene* creed, to "declare "unto the people what Holy-days, or fasting-days, are in the "following week to be observed."

Q. *Are not* some *of these days observed with* peculiar *solemnity?*

A. Yes; *Christmas-day* and *Good-Friday*, when there is a communion in all the churches, and in many only on these days, and on *Easter-Sunday* and *Whit-Sunday* † in the whole year.

† *Note*, Besides these, most other *Sundays* in the year are distinguished by particular names, as they are in the church of *Rome*. e. g. The 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Sunday in *Advent*, and 6 after it. *Septuagesima* Sunday, the 3d before *Lent*. *Sexagesima* Sunday, the 2d before *Lent*. *Quinquagesima* Sunday, the next before *Lent*. 5 Sundays in *Lent*. *Trinity* Sunday; and 25 Sundays after it.

Q. 82. *What do* Diſſenters *object to the appointment of theſe holy-days?*

A. 1. It is impoſſible many of them ſhould be obſerved without a criminal neglect of ſecular buſineſs.

2. Such obſervances encourage ſuperſtition and will-worſhip, and are a tacit reflection on the great head of the church, who has required no day to be kept holy but that which commemorates his reſurrection.

3. Some paſſages in ſcripture ſtrongly diſcourage them; eſpecially Gal. iv. 9—11. "How "turn ye again to the weak and beggarly ele- "ments? Ye obſerve days and months, and "times, and years. I am afraid of you, leſt I "have beſtowed upon you labour in vain."

Q. 83. *What is particularly objected to the obſervation of* Saints-days?

A. It looks like the adoration of departed ſpirits as practiſed in the church of Rome, and thus leads to Popery, as it evidently ſprang from thence.

Q. 84. *What is remarkable as to* the place *of performing the public-ſervice in the Church?*

A. The ordinary prayers are read in the *Deſk*, which is uſually ſituated below the *Pulpit*, from whence the ſermon is pronounced. The Baptiſmal ſervice is performed at the *Font*, which ſtands at the *Weſt* end of the church, to which the miniſter goes from the Deſk in the midſt of the prayers. As he alſo does on ſome occaſions to the *Altar*; where the Commandments, the Epiſtles, the Goſpels, and the *Offertory* * are

* Paſſages of ſcripture recommending liberality to the poor, and to the clergy; which is collected while theſe are read.

read,

read, becauſe (it is ſaid) theſe are parts of the communion ſervice; tho' there be no communion, and tho', as in ſome churches, the altar is ſo far from the congregation, that many of them can hear nothing. There alſo the *Marriage* ceremony is performed, which doubtleſs had its riſe in Popery, which makes Matrimony one of the ſeven ſacraments. Theſe cuſtoms the Diſſenters cannot but cenſure as the ſad remains of the old ſuperſtition.

N. B. The Rubric requires the prieſt to ſtand on the *North-ſide* the Table.—If it ſhould be objected to the Diſſenters, that they are inconſiſtent in ſubmitting to be married at the altar, it is anſwered, that they conſider marriage as a *civil* affair, and therefore can ſubmit to the will of the magiſtrate in regard to the *place*, as well as other circumſtances of this rite.

Q. 85. *What is the office of* Sponſors, (*or as they are commonly called*, Godfathers and Godmothers) *in the Baptiſm of Infants?*

A. Sponſors, it is ſaid, were originally joined with the parents, in times of perſecution, in an engagement for the chriſtian education of the child, as a ſecurity in caſe the parents ſhould be cut off, or apoſtatize. But they now take the whole engagement upon themſelves, which is liable to many exceptions.

Note. We have no account of *Godfathers* earlier than the 5th century.

Q. 86. *What are the chief* exceptions *againſt the office of Sponſors?*

A. 1. It excludes the parents from engaging for the education of their own children, who are, in general, the fitteſt to undertake it, and who, after all, muſt have the chief concern in it.

Note, The parents are expreſely excluded, being ſponſors by the Canons.

2. It is an hardſhip to be obliged to provide three ſureties ‡, for every child that is baptized, when none are obliged to undertake the office.

‡ For every *Male*-child there muſt be two God-fathers, and one God-mother: for every *Female*, one God-father, and two God-mothers.

3. It is making an human addition to an ordinance of Chriſt, and a new condition of chriſtian communion: for none can be baptized in the church of England without ſponſors.

Note, They are diſpenſed with in the private *half baptiſm*; a ceremony, for which it is difficult to conceive any rational foundation.

4. The engagement is of ſuch a nature, that none can literally fulfil it. For the ſponſors profeſs, in the child's name, a belief in the ſeveral articles of chriſtianity, and promiſe to "renounce the Devil and all his works, &c." Which is, in effect, promiſing that the child ſhall do all this; which the beſt man on earth cannot be anſwerable for. However, the leaſt the words can be ſuppoſed to mean is, a ſolemn promiſe in the ſureties, to take great care to uſe all proper means, that the child may underſtand and believe the articles of the chriſtian faith, and maintain a truly chriſtian temper and conduct. But

5. *This* engagement is too ſolemn for any to enter into, who do not mean to have a principal concern in the child's education; which it cannot be ſuppoſed, perſons in ordinary ſhould intend, or even be capable of. And it might well

well be imagined, that many thoughtless, ignorant, and immoral persons would, thro' the necessity of having sureties, and for want of better, be often tempted into hypocrisy, and a solemn mockery of God, by promising what they never meant to fulfil. This is accordingly known to be a common case. And thus

6. The rite of Infant-baptism is often made the occasion of sin, or is turned into a farce, and at best degenerates into a mere matter of ceremony.

SECTION V.

Of Subscription to ARTICLES.

Q. 87. *WHAT are* the terms *on which ministers are admitted into the church of England?*

A. They are all required to subscribe and declare their hearty assent and consent, to a set of Religious Articles, of human composure, (commonly called the *Thirty-nine Articles**) as being in nothing contrary to the word of God.

* The title of them is as follows; "Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the Convocation, holden at London in the year 1562, for avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion."

His Majesty in his declaration prefixed to the Articles, "prohibits his loving subjects the least difference from them, or "putting their own sense upon them, but requires them to be "taken in the literal and grammatical sense."

Q. 88. *Are not these Articles generally allowed to be* orthodox? *Why then do Dissenters object to them?*

A. The controversy is not about the sense of the Articles, (which is generally allowed to by *Calvinistical*†) but about the authority assumed by fallible men, to draw up Articles of Faith for others to subscribe, as a necessary qualification for preaching the gospel: An authority which the church of England expressly claims.

See Art. xx. "The church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and hath *authority in matters of faith.*" To the truth or falsehood of this assertion, the whole controversy between the church and the Dissenters may be reduced. See *Furn.* Lett. to *Blackstone*, p. 140. note.

Q. 89. *What is particularly* objected *to this practice?*

A. 1. That Christ never committed such authority to any man, or body of men.

† Much, however, is to be said for the contrary. See particularly, a late learned Dissertation on the XVIIth Article. Besides, there are many other particulars in these Articles, than what relate to the Calvinistical controversy, which many Calvinists, and particularly among the Dissenters, cannot subscribe. This circumstance afforded an additional motive with the Dissenting ministers for their late Application to Parliament, for relief in the affair of Subscription; and is, of itself, a sufficient vindication from the charge of their being actuated therein by a dislike to the Calvinistical sentiments. It were easy to produce several particulars, which it is hard to conceive any intelligent, conscientious Dissenter could subscribe. Let *one* suffice here, as a specimen. Art. 23. Those only are allowed to have a lawful call to the ministry, who are called to it by *public authority*. For other instances, the author with pleasure refers the reader to a work, now in the press, by his worthy friend, Mr. WILTON, entitled, *A Review of some of the Articles, &c.* in which he hath with equal learning, judgment and candour, pursued this subject.

2. That

2. That none can be qualified for it without being infallible.

3. That it is an infringement of christian liberty, and tends to discourage a free enquiry after truth.

4. That it may be the means of promoting and establishing error; and must be so in different churches, which all have (and the church of *Rome* among the rest) an equal right to demand subscription to their respective opinions.

5. That it tends to keep some inquisitive, conscientious, and able men out of the church, while it admits many idle, ignorant, mercenary persons, who either take the truth of the articles upon trust; or who, to answer their own ends, would subscribe any other set of articles, tho' contrary to these.

Q. 90. *What is the* grand argument *which the church uses to* defend *her requiring subscription?*

A. That it is necessary to secure uniformity of sentiment amongst her ministers.

Q. 91. *What is* replied *to this argument?*

A. 1. That uniformity of sentiment is not necessary to christian edification, and is never to be expected in the present state.

2. That if it were, demanding subscription to articles is not the way to secure it, for it is not in the power of ecclesiastical law to alter men's belief, though it may their profession.

3. That the sense of the articles themselves is disputed, and persons of very different sentiments profess honestly to subscribe them.

4. That the church of England, does not seem so much concerned about uniformity of *faith* in her clergy, as uniformity of *subscription*; for, tho' all are required to subscribe the same

articles, no enquiry is made whether they preach according to them, nor any notice taken of such as preach against them.

Q. 92. *Is there really a* diversity of sentiments *among the* clergy, *notwithstanding their subscription?*

A. There is as great a diversity of sentiments among the established clergy, as among any other body of ministers, as appears both from their preaching and their writings; which is the source of much controversy among them; and their having all subscribed the same articles, is the occasion of very bitter mutual reproaches.

Q. 93. *Do not* Dissenters *require a* confession of faith *from their ministers when they are ordained?*

A. The generality of them expect one, tho' some do not. However this is a very different thing from demanding subscription to a particular form of words, and excluding those from the ministry who cannot in conscience subscribe; as they leave the minister to express his own sentiments in his own way.

The minister who asks the candidate for his confession, generally takes care to shew that he claims no dominion over his faith, and that he does not require any account of it as an indispensable condition of ordination.—Indeed such an account of a minister's leading sentiments, when he is about to settle with a Congregation, is no more than prudence dictates to the people to require, and the minister to give, to prevent uneasiness afterwards; and it has a tendency to make serious and useful impressions on the mind both of the minister and people.

Q. 94. *Is* any thing else *required* of the clergy, *besides subscribing the* 39 *articles?*

A. Yes; they are obliged to declare their belief, that there is nothing in the common-prayer-book,

book, and the book of ordination, contrary to the word of God.

Q. 95. *What is there* unreasonable *in this?*

A. It is hard to suppose that in so large a volume, composed so soon after the Reformation from Popery, every thing should be perfectly agreeable to the word of God; or that so large a body of men as the clergy are, should be likely to believe that it is so; or indeed, that such a belief should be necessary to make them acceptable and useful ministers of Christ, or should in any view conduce to the good of the church.

Q. 96. *Does the church require any thing* more *of the clergy previous to their ordination?*

A. Yes; they are obliged to swear obedience to the Bishop, his Ordinary, and their successors, in every thing required in the canons. This is called canonical obedience.

N. B. The oath of canonical obedience is not limited to the Canons of 1603, (in number 141) for a great many of the old *Popish Canons* remain in full force. And it is pretty generally agreed that the Canons of 1640 bind the *Clergy*; accordingly Ep. *Gibson* always refers to them as so doing.

Q. 97. *Why is this requirement* exceptionable?

A. Because the New Testament enjoins no such submission in Christ's ministers to one another, or any human superior; and because some of these canons are such as many learned conscientious ministers cannot obey.

V. g. The clergy, among other things, are obliged by these canons, whenever the Bishop, or Ordinary, shall require it of them, to publish a sentence of excommunication against any who shall presume to speak against the common prayer,—or deny any of the 39 articles, or—condemn any of the ceremonies of the church,—or deny the authority of the arch-bishops, deans, archdeacon,

deacons, &c.—or affirm that the congregations of Protestant Dissenters are true churches.

N. B. The excommunication in all these cases is *ipso facto*. See the Canons of 1603, N°. 2—12.

Q. 98. *But since the* Clergy only *are obliged thus to subscribe, why need the* Laity *make the affair of subscription an objection against* their conformity?

A. 1. It is a sufficient reason for Lay-Nonconformity, that the church requires such unreasonable and unscriptural terms of conformity from the clergy; who are all obliged to preach the same doctrines, whether they think them right or wrong, or else break thro' the most solemn obligations.

2. Besides, the temporal emoluments connected with these subscriptions, are a strong temptation to prevaricate, and tend to bring those men into the church who are most unfit to have the charge of souls; as well as to keep out some of the most conscientious, who are best qualified for such a trust.

3. And it becomes all honest men to bear their testimony against all impositions in matters of religion, tho' they themselves be not immediately affected by them; and to countenance and encourage those ministers who, on account of these impositions, separate from the church, provided they have the necessary qualifications for their office.

SECT-

SECTION VI.

Concerning the CHOICE *of* MINISTERS.

Q. 99. *HOW are congregations* supplied with miniſters *in the church of* England?

A. Many livings * (as they are called) are in the gift of the King (as all the Biſhopricks in effect are); ſome, of the Lord Chancellor; ſome, of the Biſhops, and ſome of the univerſities; but many belong to the nobility and gentry. Every perſon having a living in his gift, (who is called the patron) may preſent whatever miniſter he pleaſes to it, and the people have no liberty to object, nor the Biſhop to refuſe (except in a few caſes) giving inſtitution and induction.

* *N. B.* Theſe livings (i. e. the advowſons, or right of preſentation) are to be bought, and are commonly advertiſed in the public papers.

Q. 100. *What is the* ill conſequence *of this power of* patrons?

A. The miniſter thus appointed is often highly diſagreeable to the people, and ſometimes ſhamefully diſqualified for his office; as preferment is more commonly obtained by favour than by merit, and patrons of livings (being ſometimes perſons void of religion) are more concerned to have miniſters in their pariſh who will make themſelves agreeable companions, or ſerve a political intereſt, than ſuch as will be faithful to the ſouls of men.

Q. 101. *In what manner do* Diſſenters *think that congregations ſhould be ſupplied with miniſters?*

A. They think that no perſon whatſoever is authorized

authorized to impose a minister upon others, but that every congregation has a right to chuse its own.

Q. 102. *How do they* vindicate *this opinion?*

A. It seems as reasonable that all persons should chuse their own ministers, as that they should chuse their own Lawyers, or Physicians. An imposition in the former case, is indeed as much more unreasonable than in the latter, as the interests of the soul are more important than those of the body.

Q. 103. *Is it not* better for the clergy, *that the people should be obliged to receive those who are thus sent to them?*

A. It is better, doubtless, in a temporal view, for those who have interest with great men, and nothing to recommend them to the people; but not for the generality of the clergy, or the most deserving of them, much less for the church; for true excellence of character, especially humility, and faithfulness in the sacred office, are too often found rather an hinderance to promotion, than the means to obtain it. Whereas, if the choice of ministers resided in the people, the best preachers commonly would have the preference, and thus there would be a powerful motive to emulation among the clergy.

Q. 104. *Is not the choice of ministers among the Dissenters, often attended with* difficulty, *and sometimes with* contentions *and* divisions?

A. Sometimes it doubtless is; but this is not, comparatively, often the case, much less necessarily so. However, it is no sufficient objection to any thing important, that it may be attended with some inconveniencies. The same argument equally

equally affects the choice of Representatives in Parliament.

Q. 105. *But are the* people *proper* judges *of a minister's qualifications?*

A. In general they may be supposed as good judges for themselves, in this case, as the patrons of livings are for them; who are often utter strangers to the parishioners. If in any instances they judge amiss, they are accountable to no human power, but to God only. And if, upon trial, they find they have chosen an improper person, they can dismiss him at their pleasure.

Q. 106. *Does the* scripture *any where invest* the people *with the right of chusing their own ministers?*

A. This seems to be a natural right; it is therefore incumbent on those who would divest them of it, to prove that the scripture has plainly given them this authority. However, the right of the people to chuse their ministers, is what the scripture very clearly and fully vindicates.

Ministers are spoken of as the servants of the church, 2 Cor. iv. 5. Christians are exhorted not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God, 1 John iv. 1. To beware of false prophets. Mat. xxiv. 24. And to take heed what they hear. Luke viii. 18. Which they cannot do, if they are bound to submit to those as their spiritual guides, whom other persons impose upon them.

When an Apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas, the whole body of the Disciples was applied to on the occasion. Acts i. And the seven Deacons were not chosen even by the Apostles themselves, but by the people: the whole multitude. Acts vi.

Q. 107. *But cannot a Parish* remove a clergyman, *who shall prove grossly immoral, or ignorant?*

A. Not without citing him into the spiritual court;

court; the proceedings of which are so slow, and so expensive, as to discourage persons, in common life, from lodging their complaints in them.

SECTION. VII.

Concerning CHURCH-DISCIPLINE.

Q. 108. *WHAT do the Dissenters think of the* Discipline *of the established church?*

A. They think it is shamefully defective and corrupt.

Q. 109. *What qualifications does the church* require *of those that come to the* Lord's-table?

A. No persons whatsoever are refused, who have been confirmed, and are not excommunicated, tho' they be guilty of gross immoralities; and numbers are permitted, yea obliged, to receive it, as a qualification for a civil-office, when there is the utmost reason to believe they have no further view.

Q. 110. *But may not the minister* refuse *giving the sacrament to those whom he, and the whole parish, know to be persons of* immmoral characters?

A. No; if the priest denies the sacrament to the most infamous sinner in his parish, he may appeal to the ecclesiastical court; and if he can secure the favour of the Chancellor, he may demand a place at the Lord's table, and defy the minister, and even the Bishop himself, to keep him from it.

Q. 111. *What would be the* consequence *if the minister,*

minister, upon a principle of conscience, were to persist in refusing the sacrament to an abandoned sinner, *or as a qualification for a* civil post?

A. He would be liable to suspension, and if he would not comply, to excommunication.

Q. 112. *But does the church suffer* no notice *to be taken of the* immorality *of its members?*

A. Yes; but neither the minister of the parish, nor any of the congregation, can exercise any sort of discipline; but their offences must be brought before the spiritual court, where Chancellors are the Judges, who are often *Laymen*, whose determinations will stand in law, tho' contrary to the Bishop's.

Q. 113. *What are the* crimes *cognizable by the spiritual court?*

A. Fornication, simony, heresy, schism, slander, perjury, neglecting the sacraments, &c.

Q. 114. *What are the* punishments *inflicted on persons found guilty of these crimes.*

A. Chiefly those which are of a carnal nature, which the gospel does not warrant; such as fines, imprisonments, deprivation, and excommunication. Even this last, is more of a carnal than of a spiritual nature, and the effects of it are dreadful.

Q. 115. *What are the effects of excommunication?*

A. The excommunicated person is not only denied the sacrament, but excluded from attending the prayers of the church, and delivered over to the devil. He is also cut off (by the greater excommunication) from commerce with christians in temporal affairs; and any one who converses with him, after being admonished to the contrary, is excommunicated himself. He cannot

not commence a ſuit at law, nor be a witneſs in any court, nor be an Attorney for another. And if he obſtinately perſiſt forty days, the King's writ ſends him to priſon, where he is to continue till he makes ſatisfaction to the church for his offence; and if he dies without having done it, he is denied chriſtian burial.

Q. 116. *To* what perſons *does the power of the ſpiritual court extend?*

A. Not merely to all thoſe who profeſs to belong to the eſtabliſhed church, (whether they receive the ſacrament or not,) but in ſome caſes, to all kinds of perſons who diſſent from it, and is ſometimes employed to excommunicate thoſe from the church who never belonged to it.

Q. 117. *Does the church* often *proceed to ſeverity with perſons for the crimes above-mentioned?*

A. Very ſeldom, unleſs they are perſons of ſubſtance, who can ſtop the proceedings by a ſum of money. And in order to extort large ſums from ſuch, cauſes in this court have often been very corruptly managed.

Q. 118. *But ſince this is properly the* Biſhop's *court, may not* he interpoſe *if he imagines any cauſe is corruptly managed?*

A. No, he cannot; the Chancellor is ſupreme and uncontrouled in his court, not liable to be reſtrained, or directed in his judicial proceedings, but finally and abſolutely determines even in caſes of excommunication*.

* See Diſſent. Gent. Letters, p. 70, &c.

Q. 119. *What kind of diſcipline does the church maintain with reſpect to* her miniſters?

A. Such as is very looſe and ſcandalous; no ſufficient care being taken to prevent the admiſſion

miſſion of unqualified miniſters into the church, or to eject them from it.

Q. 120. *What qualifications are required of* Clergymen, *in order to their getting ordination?*

A. They are required by the canons to paſs an examination * by the Biſhop, with reſpect to their learning, and to produce to him a recommendation from three Clergymen concerning their moral character. But it is well known, that it is no difficult matter for perſons very poorly qualified, in both theſe reſpects, to get into orders, and even into good benefices.

* *Note*, The Biſhops are prohibited, by the Canons, ordaining any man, "unleſs at the leaſt he can give an accurate account of *his faith*, according to the 39 Articles, in *Latin*." But their Lordſhips find it often neceſſary to diſpenſe with this; ſo little care being taken at our Univerſities, in the education of the clergy, that many come for ordination who cannot paſs ſuch a teſt. Witneſs that well known lamentation of Bp. *Burnet* on this head: "Our *Ember-Weeks* (ſays he) are the grief and burden of my life. The much greater part of thoſe who come to be ordained, are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by thoſe who are not obliged to know it," *&c. &c. Burnet's Paſt. Care*, New preface, p. 5.

Q. 121. *But are ignorant and immoral miniſters ſuffered to* remain *in the church?*

A. Tho' the canons relating to the character and conduct of the clergy, are very ſtrict and good *, it is well known they are very little regarded; whilſt thoſe reſpecting mere *forms* and *ceremonies* are rigorouſly obſerved. The conſequence of which is, many of the clergy are extremely looſe in their morals, as well as greatly defective in their knowledge and application to ſtudy †.

" No

* " No eccleſiaſtical perſon ſhall at any time—reſort to any " Taverns, or Alehouſes—nor give themſelves to—drinking or " riot, ſpending their time idly by day or night, playing at dice, " cards, or tables, or any other unlawful game: but—always " endeavouring to profit the church of God, having always in " mind that they ought to excel all others in purity of life, &c." See Canon lxxv.

‡ *N. B.* It ought, however, to be acknowledged, and it is here acknowledged with pleaſure, that many others of them, are perſons of diſtinguiſhed learning, and exemplary piety. They will own, with grief, the truth of the above deplorable account.

Q. 122. *Are any clergymen ſuffered to enjoy their benefices, who* neglect *the* public duties *of their office?*

A. Yes; many of them enjoy large emoluments, (holding ſeveral valuable livings, and other church preferments) who ſeldom or never preach †, and do not reſide within many miles of their pariſhes; but get poor curates, for a very ſmall ſum, to do their work ‖ for them.

Q. 123. *What*

† This is more eſpecially true of the *Biſhops*, whoſe other numerous engagements and ſuperior dignity are thought to excuſe them from *preaching*, excepting now and then on ſpecial occaſions. Whereas the ſcripture repreſents preaching as the principal part of the epiſcopal office. See 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 2. And the Apoſtles freed themſelves from all ſecular cares that they might " give themſelves continually to prayer and " the miniſtry of the word." Acts vi. 2—4.

‖ See this very evil cenſured in the prieſts of old. Ezek. xliv. 8. " Ye have not kept the charge of my holy things, " but ye have *ſet keepers* of my charge, [or *Curates*] in my " ſanctuary, for yourſelves." It cannot be wondered at that ſome have in this caſe been apt to apply Iſa. lvi. 10, 11 ——— Near a-kin to this is another evil, (ſomewhat ſimilar to that cenſured Jeremiah xxiii. 30.) which is ſo notorious, that MS. Sermons are commonly advertiſed in the News-papers: and it is well known that ſome of the clergy freely borrow the ſermons of

Q. 123. *What do the members of the church say* in vindication *of the* discipline *of it?*

A. The sensible and candid of them are obliged to own that it is very corrupt; and the Liturgy itself teaches them once a year, (viz. on *Ash-Wednesday*) to wish the godly discipline of the primitive church restored.

Q. 124. *Why then is not the primitive discipline* restored?

A. The pretence always has been, that the times would not admit of it. But the truth of the case is, the discipline of the church is so corrupt, that those who wish an amendment know not where to begin, and those whose province it is are too much interested in its present corrupt state to attempt it. And in order to save themselves the trouble of a reformation, or thro' fear of losing their emoluments, they either would persuade us that things are very well as they are, or that it is hazardous to attempt an amendment.

of *Dissenters.* (See *Two Letters to the Prelates*, p. 30.) These are plain proofs that the discipline of the church is very bad, and it cannot be surprising if they should operate in favour of Lay-Nonconformity.

SECTION VIII.

INFERENCES *from the Whole.*

Q. 125. *WHAT inferences may be drawn from the foregoing account of the Church of England?*

A. 1. That it is very imperfectly reformed from

from *Popery*, and ſtill bears too ſtrong a reſemblance to the church of *Rome* *.

* See this in a ſtriking manner illuſtrated in *Delaune's Plea for the Nonconformiſts*, p. 34—56.

2. That therefore it behoves thoſe who have power in the church, to exert themſelves in order to carry on the Reformation; which the firſt Reformers never meant ſhould be left ſo incompleat; and endeavour to perfect what they ſo nobly begun, with greater difficulty and hazard than their ſucceſſors have in the preſent day any reaſon to fear; that ſo the church of England might be a true, conſiſtent, proteſtant church.

3. That while thoſe on whom this work properly devolves, are determined to take no ſteps towards a further reform in the church, but on the contrary endeavour to keep things as they are; it is the indiſpenſible duty of thoſe who are diſſatisfied with them, and whoſe conſciences would be uneaſy with conformity, in a peaceable manner to diſſent.

4. That the Diſſenters ought to be exceedingly thankful to God for, and diligent to the utmoſt to *improve*, the liberty they enjoy, of ſeparating from a national church, which they think ſo corrupt, and of worſhipping God in places of their own, in a manner agreeable to the dictates of their conſciences, and, as they think, to the rules of God's holy word; at the ſame time ſympathizing with, and praying for thoſe of their Proteſtant brethren abroad, who are deprived of this privilege.

5. That they ſhould alſo be grateful to their civil governors, the king, and thoſe in authority under him, thro' whoſe clemency they enjoy privileges

privileges (though no other than their natural right) far ſuperior to what their anceſtors enjoyed in ſome former reigns; and to teſtify their gratitude by approving themſelves good ſubjects, endeavouring to promote the proſperity of their country, and preſerve its peace, in every inſtance, that is conſiſtent with a due regard to the liberty of the conſtitution.

6. That they ought to be zealous in maintaining thoſe great principles, on which their diſſent from the church is founded, and not only be ſtedfaſt in their adherence to the cauſe of Nonconformity, but liberal and active to ſupport and encreaſe it, by all ſuch methods as are conſiſtent with peace, liberty, and charity; a proper regard to the cauſe of practical godlineſs, and to the intereſt of Chriſt at large, even in that church from which they diſſent.

They ſhould love good men of every name, and rejoice whereſoever, "Chriſt is preached, "and God is worſhipped in Spirit," tho' the mode be different from their own; making all proper allowances for the prejudices of education, which often have an amazing influence on the beſt of men. But a true catholic ſpirit does not require men to give up their own principles, or be indifferent to the ſupport of them, or admit of conforming to thoſe modes and forms, or ſubmitting to thoſe human impoſitions which we judge to be unſcriptural, merely becauſe they are received by thoſe whom we believe to be eminent for piety, or becauſe they hold the grand fundamental doctrines of the goſpel.

It deſerves the ſerious conſideration of many Diſſenters in the preſent day, whether theirs is not a *miſtaken catholiciſm*, and inconſiſtent with the

the principles of the original diſſent, and of true Proteſtantiſm, which leads them ſo commonly to deſert their own miniſters and churches, to attend the preaching of thoſe evangelical clergymen who have lately riſen up in the church of England. They deſerve great reſpect, and it doubtleſs becomes us to wiſh ſucceſs to their labours, and to rejoice in the appearance of it, among thoſe who have been brought up in the eſtabliſhed way of worſhip. But, not to make any compariſon between the preaching of theſe miniſters and our own, if the principles of the diſſent from the national church be of any importance, (and whether they be or not, let the foregoing pages determine) ſurely thoſe diſſenters act a very inconſiſtent part, who are ſo indifferent to them, and forget that their brave fore-fathers, whom they profeſs to venerate, left the national church not on account of *doctrines*, but thoſe impoſitions on conſcience which ſtrike at the Headſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, and which this church ſtill continues to practiſe.

THE END OF THE SECOND PART.

A LIST of BOOKS, relating to the Subject of this CATECHISM; and proper to be read after it, in order to a fuller Acquaintance with the HISTORY and the PRINCIPLES of the PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

1. A PLEA for the Nonconformists, by *Tho. De Laune.* Price 1 *s.* 6 *d.*

2. A Vindication of the Principles and Practice of Protestant Dissenters, in Question and Answer, by *Samuel Bourn.* Price 1 *s.* 6 *d.*

3. A Vindication of the Dissenters, by *James Pierce.* 1 vol. 8vo.

4. A Memorial of the Reformation, by *Benj. Bennet.* 1 Vol. 8vo.

5. A Dissent from the Church of England fully justified: being the Dissenting Gentleman's Three Letters and P. S. in answer to Mr. *John White*'s on that Subject. With a Letter to a Bishop. 1 vol. 12mo.

6. A Review of the Case of Liturgies and their Imposition, in Answer to Mr. *Bennet*, by *Ben. Robinson.* 1 vol. 8vo.

7. An Abridgement of Mr. *Baxter*'s History of his Life and Times: With an Account of the Ministers who were ejected after the Restoration of Charles II. By *Edmund Calamy*, D. D. 4 large vols. 8vo.

8. The History of the Puritans, from the Reformation, by *Daniel Neal*, M. A. 4 vols. 8vo. (now out of print.) Also in 2 vols. 4to. the edition always referred to in this work.

9. Letters to the Hon. Mr. *Justice Blackstone*, concerning his Exposition of a Clause in the Toleration Act, by *Philip Furneaux*, D. D. 2d Edit.